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Crikey!

The Great British Comics Magazine!



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Crikey! Editorial

Brian M Clarke *editor*

Glenn B Fleming *Designer*

Tom Sweetman *Publicist*

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Crikey! readers have their say.

Gosh, blimey and, yes, Crikey!

It's been an exciting time for those of us slaving away in the Crikey! shed at the bottom of the garden since the launch of the magazine.

The feedback has been terrific with lots of pals on the back for creating a magazine that recognises the great strips and talented creatives who have worked in British comics over the past several decades. One thing that has come through loud and clear is a strong preference for Crikey! to widen the brief on what will and will not be included. We originally said that we were covering comics from roughly TV Comic (early '50s) to just before the launch of 2000AD (late '70s). Well lots of people challenged us on that saying that we should include all British comics.

And we agree. So we shall.

Starting with this issue we're going to cover all aspects of British comics – no matter the period, genre or format. If it's British, then let's talk about it.

We also received a few letters pointing out errors and omissions and, thankfully, including corrections. Which brings me to an important point.

British comics' fandom isn't as well organised as say American comics, telefantasy or science fiction fandoms. At the moment we don't have a definitive history of ourselves. It isn't widely known who we should praise (or blame) when it comes to creating, writing and drawing the thousands of strips created over the past 100 years or so.

We need people to get involved with Crikey! If we occasionally get something wrong or leave something out – let us know. It's no good going home and belling the cat. Cats are rubbish at correcting the public record. Tell us. We need to know.

We sometimes need help in identifying artists. If we have left something uncredited and you know who the artist is – let us know. The cat might look like he's interested as you go on about Frank McDiarmid this or Sid Burgen that but he's not. We are.

For example, we received a couple of emails with the names of the artists we sampled for the 'Nutty Notions' feature in issue one. In the order they were presented, the identities can be revealed as;

- King Bernard – Tony Harding.
- Fishboy – John Stokes.
- Whizzers of Dizz – Paddy Brennan.
- Dusty Dan – Andy Tew.
- Steel Commando – Alex Henderson.
- Birdman of Barzotoga – Felix Carrion.
- Chairman Cherry – Colin Merritt.
- Space Granity – Andrew Wilson.
- My Pal Ropsy – Albert Holroyd.
- Cecil the Stone-age Scrapper – C D Bagnall.
- The Limping Man – Harry Furggula.

See you in January!

Brian M Clarke – Editor

Our Crikey Chum of the Month is – Bill McLoughlin at DC Thomson for helping us get through a sticky launch and providing us with valuable support when we needed it. Thanks, Bill.

Writers this issue:

Ray Aspen; Helen D Bennett; Brian M Clarke; Marc-Andre; Glenn B Fleming; Steve Holland; Terry Hooper; Colin Noble; Tom Sweetman and Tom Elliott.

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Each issue of Crikey! features a selection of some of the lovingly bizarre concepts that have graced the pages of British comics in years past. Ideas and nominations for future NNs gratefully accepted through the Crikey! website (www.crikeyuk.co.uk), click 'contact' and away you go! Enjoy!

The blind men who see a vital class



The steak in the snow baits a trap—to catch Sandtrout.



Rob Riley



(Hotspur 1968)

"The Blind Flyers, specially chosen R.A.F. pilots, had taken a drug which enabled them to see perfectly at night, but left them blind in daylight." This Cold War spies-and-airmen strip pitched our blind men against an evil foreign power – and various power-mad small-minded dictators with even smaller countries.

No matter how serious the problem, our heroes would always see them off.



(July 1968)

Poor Sandra Wilson! She's been lucky enough to win the lead in the Imperial Ballet Company's new production 'Pocahontas' but on the way to Russia (Boo! Hiss!) the plane is sabotaged (Hmmm...) and they crash land in Greenland.

Nothing nutty in that, you say.

Well what would you do? You could prepare to get rescued. You might look for food and supplies. You may build a shelter. Or you could do what these thoroughly English young ladies did "...the dancers continue rehearsing in the hope that they will be rescued in time to perform in Moscow".



Rob Riley

(Look and Learn incorporating Ranger 1968)

Normally a strip such as Rob Riley wouldn't make it into a feature like Nutty Notions. At heart it's little more than the story of two chums falling into minor adventures and basically getting along with the world. What moves it into NN territory is the way the strip is sold to its readers.

"Rob tells in his own words of his life and adventures at Westhaven-on-Sea..."

With a strapline like that you just had to keep on reading. Although most of the action and storytelling was run of the mill, the strip did have one interesting historical element – Riley's best friend Ham was black.



Brassy Cassy - the Oompah Girl (Mandy 1968)

It's 1968 and music is in the air – and in this case it has a distinctly brassy sound. Cassy Redman is a 14-something schoolgirl trying to raise money to build a playground for the children of her hometown of Toddlewick.

The solution is obvious; form a brass band and win £3500 in a handy competition. So the search is on to find likely players who can take on their rivals for the grand prize. Will the kids get their playground..?



The Wonder Dart (Eagle and Boys' World 1964-6)

Ah, the length a boy will go to in order to win the powered model-aircraft competition. Cornelius Dimworthy – Corny to his friends – was one of those boarding school kids who was forever getting into trouble for breaking minor house rules. The Wonder Dart told the exciting story of a determined boy and his high-tech model plane out to fly further and faster than the rest. Be still my beating heart!



Patty's Pie (Diana 1965)

Life's hard and sometimes you have to go the extra mile to help out family and friends. Heroes and heroines are always making sacrifices and taking risks for the benefit of others.

Patty Lane "...hopes to bring prosperity back to the forgotten village of Faradale by winning an important cookery contest with the secret recipe for the once-famous Dover's Pie."

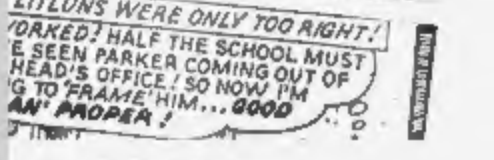
Well it worked for Bakewell.



Mr Bubbles (Sparky 1969 -75)

Why don't we let our balloony buddy explain the set-up for himself? "Hi, Folks! My name's Mr Bubbles and I'm a bubble imp. I live in a plastic bottle and every time someone squeezes it I pop out and give them three wishes!"

Created by Pam Chapeau, Mr Bubbles was one of those weird characters that you never knew if they existed for all to see or just in the mind of whoever squeezed the bottle that week. Everyone just seemed to accept the fact that a foot-high man-shaped pile of bubbles was talking to them.



Pete's Pocket Army (Buster and Cor! 1973-8)

Pete Parker – no, not that one! – had been "... adopted by six tiny aliens from the planet Liturnus who had been stranded after their spaceship crashed near the town of Whitford."

Written by Tom Tully and drawn by British comics stalwart Solano Lopez the strip followed the schoolboy adventures of Pete and his sextet of super-strong spacemen. Focusing on Pete's conflicts with bullies, winning football matches and just getting along at school the strip showed us exactly what it would be like to have a gang of micro-friends in our back-pack! ●



Golden Broon

By Tom Sweetman

The past is a foreign country – they do things differently there. Well so is Scotland, home of the Broon family, immortalized every week since 8 March 1936 in Scotland's Sunday Post newspaper as part of the legendary 'Merry Mac's Fun Parade'. This comic strip pull-out section was the home (at 10 Glebe Street, Auchentogie) for not only for the famous Scottish family but also for the exploits of Oor Wullie who appeared in several cross-over stories with his Scottish neighbours.

Tradition

Way back when, there didn't seem much to know about Scotland: a mix of New Year's Eve kilted and saber crossed hullabaloo, a dark blue Braveheart but no good football team that regularly led the challenge for the Home Championship wooden spoon and all in all that was about it.

Well not exactly. Although I didn't know it at the time, a lot of the traditions and childhood customs that filled our weekly comic delights were Scottish in nature and origin. This was not clear though as the characters who appeared in comics and annuals seemed so very English. Not just Lord Snooty and Winker Watson but just about everybody with the obvious exception of Desperate Dan. We had our well founded suspicions about Ginger and maybe Biffo the Bear but all the rest could have lived

down the road in Ardwick and when you think of people like Hungry Horace and Keyhole Kate they probably did.

But not the Broons.

Not only were they anchored in a Scottish newspaper and limp-backed annuals but they actually spoke in a phonetic jumble located somewhere in a backyard between Dundee and Glasgow. Sometimes the only sense that could be made of the Broon dialect was to lay on your back and read the thing out loud in your best Scottish accent, verging into Irish at times but definitely the twang of foreign shores. My parents questioned little about my childhood but looked awry with raised brows when I read the Broons.

"Oh! Oh! Jings Paw. I ken the auld lad wis up tae somethin' – he's doon on the floor speakin' as he should-nae."

"Aye ma, I didna ken he wor a Frenchie."

Accent on Fun

We were lucky in our house as my Dad seemed to have every single newspaper delivered by a broken backed and spotty lad. Looking back it seems strange that aside from the five English papers that were rammed through our letter box for close to 15 minutes every Sunday morning (*News of the World*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People* ... redtop heaven) there was not one but two





Scottish papers. Papers all the way from Scotland – no wonder the lad looked a wee tired and a lang time oot there.. oh no there I go again

I remember nothing about the *Sunday Mail* but the *Sunday Post* had Merry Mac's Fun Parade and the Broons. Most kids found out about the family exploits of the tenement tams every snow filled December as it seemed that everyone got the Broons annual for Christmas. There was a reason for this – it was soft back and at less than half the price of 'real' annuals a great bendy stocking filler. The fact that it was written in a foreign language did not seem to matter. It was cheap. It had loads in it. And it was funny.

Annual Madness

Annuals were strange things back then. They arrived on December 25th wrapped in paper and not three weeks later were sold off at half price. Every Yuletide this annual tartan treat would collect together the Sunday tales in chronological order. That was the great thing about the Broons, you could set your clocks by their antics. The great events of the year flipped by at the rate of a page a minute. Easter, Christmas, snowy winters, too-hot Summers, windy winters – they were there year after year. Just like real life.

If it was July, the Broons were off to their cottage in the country. (They lived in a tenement flat – 11 of them – how on earth did they afford the cottage?). Grandpaw would be away down the pond to cool his feet and Ma would have the sandwiches basketted and ready for the feeding of the eleven thousand. Sometimes Hen and Jock would take off 'Awa' tae the open-air dancin' wi' thae lasses.' But Ma could rest easy because they would always be back for the 'bus haeme an' a sooper of some tatties'.

Great Learning

There is potential for vast social studies and bold dissertations to be written

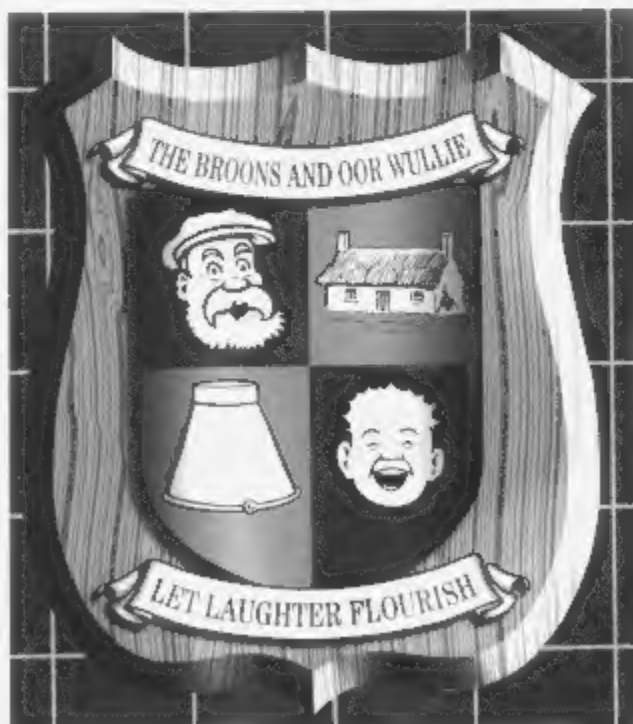
around the Broons. You can hear them now, those post-modern existentialists high on wacky-baccy and haggis. 'Evidently the socio-economic factors that pervaded post-war, post-industrial, post early for Christmas Britain were foreshadowed and echoed through the verisimilitude of the proto-Marxist nuances that characterized Ma's radical feminist-materialistic position and her refusal to len' Paw a tanner for his baccy!' (1)

Clearly financially poor and often struggling to make ends meet, the Broons lived through the war and the austerity that followed and yet still seemed to be steeped in middle-class values. Their holidays alone were the envy of many a working class home as was their laden Christmas table. Just as every working class person in *Coronation Street* and *Eastenders* is in reality a hardened owner of the means of production (think about it they own pubs, garages, hairdressers, clubs, snooker halls, chippies, factories and nuclear power plants) the Broons didn't do too badly. Their kids even had chairs to sit on and not an up-turned bucket like Oor Wullie!

Charming Beauty

The page-long strips now take on their own beauty and charm as a telescope to the past. At the time what mattered was the comedy and the tensions that existed between the generations. Although even there the gap was almost non-existent as the twins appeared to be older than their Grandpaw and the Wee Bairn often stood with her hands on her hips disapproving of the behaviours of those who were older.

Now though take a look around the rooms. Check out what they are wearing. Look at the funny buses where you could get on and jump off at the back. This isn't Scotland it's post-war Manchester. Stone sink kitchens with mangles, like those found in Southend. A food press in the corner and a roaring fire with a big black kettle whistling away. Just like Birmingham.





Daphne Broon



Paw Broon



Grandpaw Broon



Maw Broon



Hen Broon



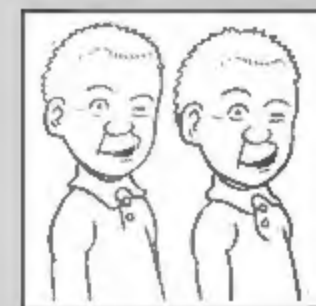
Joe Broon



Maggie Broon



Horace Broon



The Twins



The Balm

KNOW YOUR BROONS ...

Maw Broon - the mother of the eight youngest Broons. She has to run every aspect of the household and keep Paw In line. A Grey Granite Matriarch with a heart of gold.

Paw Broon - long suffering chap who long ago gave up thinking he wore the trousers and who just tries to keep enough back for a bit of 'baccy' and a bet on the horses. With his comb-over hairstyle and walrus moustache, his appearance was supposedly based on A.C. "Archie" Brown, the chief editor of D.C. Thomson at the time *The Broons* originated.

Granpaw Broon - Paw's father. He lives in his own house and spends most of his time sitting on a park bench with his 'cronies'. Shares Paw's preoccupation with having an ample supply of tobacco. Granpaw was a slightly later addition, not appearing in the earliest strips. A first name is not given for the character, although it begins with a 'J'. In some of the earlier strips, the family had a picture of Granpaw on their wall, which could do certain actions, such as wagging its finger at the children.

Daphne Broon - the somewhat dowdy daughter who is always playing second fiddle to Maggie on double dates. Every few years she has a stroke of luck when the double dates get mixed up and she gets Maggie's man. At least once a year Daphne tries to go on a diet but fails to lose any weight.

Hen Broon - the lanky, awkward son. About 30 years old and an average guy who rarely gets the girl. He is often taken advantage of for his height, for example being made to act as a clothes stand to keep the washing line up. For his sins he supports Rangers. Hen is aspirational, for example every couple of years or so he buys a car. Such purchases, however, always end in failure.

Joe Broon - a regular guy, usually noted for his strength and love of boxing. He is a Celtic supporter. A ploy intended to please both sides of the Broon readership although unusual within the one family.

Maggie Broon - the beautiful, blonde, glamorous daughter. Has a steady stream of beaux. In earlier times, was called Sadie.

Horace Broon - a bookish schoolboy forever trying to learn poetry by rote amidst the chaos of a do-it-yourself chimney-sweeping mishap or other domestic turmoil.

The Twins - rambunctious youngsters usually adding to the chaos with a fistfight or a good game of Cowboys and Indians. One is called Eck but they are always referred to collectively. Granpaw tends to call them; "ae' twin" and "the ither twin". They do very passable impressions of Oor Wullie

The Balm - basically a smaller version of Maw. She's already getting in her practice of indignant moral pronouncements and pointing out the foolishness of the male Broons. Dresses as though she were sixty. Tends to be the member of the family with the most common sense.



Here may be the charm of this strip: as kids it reassured us that the world we lived in was comfortably uniform. As adults The Broons take us back to a time that we often forget existed. Did we really collect bommy wood? Were we once happy with a tangerine? Did we run from policemen with catapults in our pockets? Or nail together a plank and some wheels, attach a rope and then go hurtling down a hill on our bogies and when our faces eventually got a proper washing - to rub away the grime - did they shine?

Different World

If you really need convincing that we live in a different world now and not just another country come along to a fitba (football) match with the Broons. Dark suited queues outside that snake around the ground, cloth capped and rattle holding fans with mono stripe scarves, a cup of Bovril (or the Scottish equivalent) and the whack of leather on leather.

Most of the time the Broons found themselves watching the game for free though, either from a tenement window, the roof of the ground or a nearby tree. Och aye - different times. Need further proof? Then queue for a couple of hours outside the cinema, pay for a place in the cheap seats and discover you can't see the screen because of Grandpaw's baccy cloud.

The times they have changed. Hell, you could even smoke in Scotland in those days. That said I was recently in Edinburgh and bought a *Sunday Post*. They're still there, The Broons. Age has not withered them although as I get older Daphne's looking more of a babe.

There is some crime in Auchentogle - every now and then Ben the Bike thief will get stopped by the twins on their bogie or a crazed bus conductor will give cheek to Maw. Other than that the closest thing to criminal damage is either Hen's DIY attempts or Daphne's hairdo! But time has moved on. Their house is looking a wee bit spick and span and Grandpaw was eyeing up an iPod while the twinnies were waving controllers around some Wi-Fi Nintendo race game. I guess progress comes eventually to take us away from the past- even at number 10 Glebe Street.

Not too much progress though. It's reassuring to think of the Broons frozen in some timeless universe where the years simply have not rolled by. ●

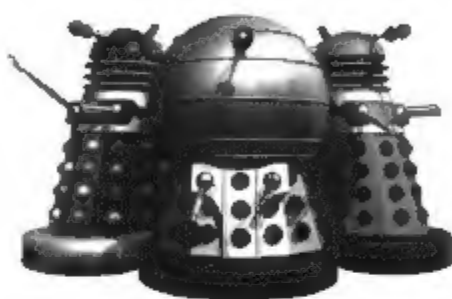
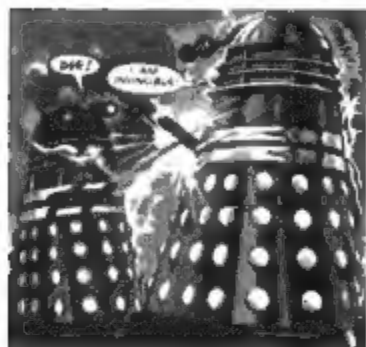
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- 1) Sweetman, Tom.
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Manchester, 2007.



Zeg the invincible!

By Tom Sweetman



Some concepts are just too good to be true. Let me give you two. Imagine a comic that had all of your favourite Anderson strips. I'm talking Fireball XL5, Stingray, Thunderbirds and 'Lady Penelope'. You can't get better than that, right? Wrong! Imagine that same comic with Daleks on the back cover!

Now for the second amazing concept. Imagine the Daleks fighting amongst themselves - a battle royal between the globe domed golden emperor Dalek and - in the red corner - Zeg the Invincible.

The Dalek strip that rounded off TV Century 21 comic was simply breathtaking in conception. Here were the chronicles of Dalek evolution. Here was their political structure, their battles - even their philosophy outlined in glorious colour. Yes, it was exciting when a Dalek emerged from the river Thames on TV but that was black and white and transitory in the pre-video world. These images glowed and lasted. The perfect finale to

the perfect comic. The peak of perfection though came in ruby red in the form of Zeg. A Dalek who was not just invincible but also totally devoid of all sanity.

Dalekenium

The story appeared in seven lovingly crafted parts starting with Zeg's appearance as a Dalek worker in an inventions factory where he is part of a team trying to strengthen Dalekenium. Zeg is a mindless drone until a freak Skaro lightning storm leads to his being covered in a strange chemical mixture. His dialogue records the last time that the witless Zeg feels pain, 'The heat! The dreadful heat of it! Aahh!'

They knew how to write dialogue in those days.

Emerging from his chemical baptism rises the new Zeg who explains that he feels strange - almost on the verge of joy!

The Daleks become concerned that although Zeg has



'The Dalek Duel' story ran from 6 April to 18 May 1965. Written by Dr. Who stalwart David Whitaker and illustrated by veteran Dalek artist Richard Jennings. Constantly changing perspectives brought a strong sense of action to a strip based on mostly static machines. Not an easy job to pull off.



been through a terrible ordeal he had lost more than his position on the production line. As Zeg declares himself invincible, his fellow workers come to the conclusion that he must be destroyed. Their rays are useless against Zeg's invulnerable frame though and he goes on to tell the emperor Dalek that he has invented a new substance called Metalalart. Confident with his invincible aura, Zeg announces that he himself should now be Emperor.

The symbolism of a red worker challenging his master stands as a striking analogy of cold war proletarian struggle as Zeg decides to challenge the political order through that most resolute of Dalek qualities: technological innovation.

Zeg victorious

To prove his worth and invincibility Zeg is pitted against the powerful Black Dalek. When the Emperor's champion is unable to even scratch the chemically hardened Zeg the fickle Dalek masses chant in unison that they salute the mighty Zeg.

The Emperor's next move after failing to win through the use of might is to consult the Dalek brain machine. The intellectual computer giant proclaims that Zeg must prove brains - Emperor must prove strength - The victor of a duel will rule Daleks.

It may have been the greatest computer in the cosmos but complete sentences seemed to be beyond its tech spec.

The Emperor uses guile to trick Zeg into a fall from a rocky height into a river of acid which he once again manages to escape. The pursuit of his former leader is relentless and finally Zeg hunts him down and in a blistering and totally unexpected panel, exterminates him!

Remember that Zeg was a little devoid in the brain department though and the Emperor he destroyed was actually an inflatable plastic decoy. The real Emperor leads the mighty Zeg into the old Dalek workshops for the final showdown. Here Zeg is covered in liquid acid succumbing to its incredible cold. Within moments his life freezes away from him. The Emperor proclaims his

return to power and embarks once more on his quest to master the universe.

Cold comfort

Order had been restored to the Dalek social structure as Zeg's — considered challenge was defeated by the very cold that stood as a powerful metaphor for the Dalek approach to life.

Zeg had tried to seize power for the very reason that he had become the most powerful, a strong tenet of Dalek philosophy. The reason for existence is based on the survival of the strongest and the most capable and this led to Zeg's challenge. It is only by the application of superior intellect that the Emperor is able to hold on to his power base.

The identification of the Emperor as a Dalek devoid of the traditional Dalek casing isolates him physically as well as mentally from the drones who populate Skaro. Zeg's challenge is characterised by his possession of a name and a colour that the rest of the Daleks do not have. Far from being just another worker he possessed an individual name and as such is different from his fellow workers.

The Dalek strip fitted well into the world of TV21. The Gerry Anderson machines showed man in control of technology and science and the Daleks showed just what could happen when all of this went wrong or simply too far. Zeg emerged as an individual who challenged the collective and he was destroyed.

A lesson for us all. *

Eagle-eyed readers will spot the first appearance of the Smiley Dalek in the strip on the left.





Left
Winker
Watson
(Dandy)
1991

The Crikey! chat



Drawings
Buster! 1976



Me & My Shadow (Whizzer & Chips) 1969

In all fairness this should be called The Art and Words of Terry and Sheila Bave. Before sitting down with Terry I was unaware of the part Terry's wife played in his work - showing just why these interviews are necessary. Here then, is their story.

Terry Bave

By Terry Hooper

Crikey! In the time honoured tradition of a Terry Hooper interview, I begin with the simplest of questions where were you born - and I will not accept 'under a gooseberry bush'!

Terry Bave: Bristol! Yes! At the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

C: What are your first memories of comics? Were you encouraged to read comics by anyone in particular or was it just part of a normal kid's life?

TB: Very like *The Dandy*, back in the Thirties.

C: When did you realise that you wanted to be a comic strip artist? Did you always want to draw humorous strips? And like the rest of us (Terry Hooper is a comic artist - Ed), did you fill up loads of exercise books with your own comic strips?

TB: Always! But it was not that easy to break into the business. Most work then was being carried out in-house.

C: So what titles/strips do you recall that inspired you?

TB: *Beano*, *Dandy* - American comics.

C: Can I ask, did you have any formal art training at all?

TB: No.

C: All right. So you got your style and work to a professional standard - how did you set about trying to get work in comics?

TB: I approached the editor of *Wham!* (Albert Cosser or 'Cos' as he was affectionately known by staff and readers alike. This would have been in 1967 - Hooper).

I took over the ageing strip 'Sammy Shrink', revived it and progressed from there. I ghosted such favourites as 'Grimly Feendish' and 'Percy's Pets'.

When Fleetway took over Odham's Press (1969) I was invited by Jack Legrand - the managing editor of Fleetway - to assist in the preparation of a brand new title aimed at seven to 11 year olds - *Whizzer and Chips*, edited by Bob Paynter. I was impressed by Bob's enthusiasm and determination. I took his ideas along with his genuine interest in the more traditional style of 'funnies'. We stayed with Bob Paynter for over twenty years producing many strips for many titles.

C: As readers will see when they check out your list of strips at the end of this interview! I do know however, that you worked on *Aqua Lad* and *Andy's Ants* - later changed to *'Adam and his Ants'*. Was

the name change due to the popularity of the pop group Adam and the Ants? Also, can you tell us how yours and Sheila's creative process worked?

TB: To the name change - no.

I should point out to readers not familiar with British comics that changing a character's name to alter fit-in with something popular is not unusual (Q-Bikes to Q-Karts for instance - Ed).

In my effort to produce new ideas and characters, Sheila and I held parties where we invited local children, along with our son Russell. We displayed drawings then tested out storylines to get a reaction and suchlike. Amongst those local children was a young lad, Steven, who was mad about collecting insects and that's where Adam came from.

In fact, in 1968-9, for *Whizzer and Chips*, we originally submitted 14 new and original characters with several weeks' storylines. All were accepted by Jack Legrand who then offered me the opportunity to draw as many as I wished - or could!

At the start Sheila and I wrote much of our own material - which we had also done at Odham's. Then, as time went on, and due to the volume of output, we were supported by other writers. Many

Terry and Sheila Bave

Crawling, writing and drawing comics since 1967

(A) a Bave creation. (B) taken over from other artists. (C) Ghosted. When?

1967 *Shimmy Shrink* (B). *The Tiddlers* (B). *Baby Whamster* (A).

1968 *Eagle Eye* (C).

1969 *Dummy Date* (C).

Smash!

1967 *Baby Smasher* (A).

1969 *Grimley Foolish* (C). *Percy's Pits* (C). *Big End* (C).

Bad Penny (B). *Sweets and Blats* (C). *Sarn's Spook* (C).

Post

1968 *The Dolls at St Bammies* (C). *Woe Willie Haggis* (C).

News

1969 *Tin Teacher* (C). *Big Chief Pave-Wear* (C).

1970 *Eagle Bombers* (A). 1974 *Draculass* (A). 1983 *Good Guy* (A).

1985 *Pete's Pop-up Book* (A). 1987 *Mighty Mouth* (A).

1988 *Double Trouble* (A). 1990 *Moby's Mirror* (B).

1991 *Figments of Phil's Imagination* (A). *Imagine* (A).

Whizzer and Chips

1969 *Ginger's Turn* (A). *Pluto Dogs* (A). *Aqua Lead* (A). *Mipper* (A).

Parker the Purkin (A). *Bob-A-Job* (A). *Marty's Morscape* (A).

The Champ (B). *Jim and My Shadow* (A). *Shimmy Shrink* (A).

Little Saver (A). *Kerrie Kid* (A). *Puddin' Tops* (A).

Scribbler (A).

1970 *Jeremy Jackie and Mister Myke* (A). *Ringer Dinger* (A).

Soury's and St Mary's (A).

1973 *Belle Tani* (C). *Smart Alec* (B). *Old Ball* (B).

Smimmy Shrink (B).

1975 *Police Dog and Cat Burglar* (A). 1976 *Sweet Tooth* (C).

1989 *Taroom* (A).

Com

1970 *Andy's Ants* (A). *Donovan's Dad* (A).

Mike's Magic Mould (A).

1972 *The Simms* (A). 1974 *Him A Horror* (C).

1975 *Yell's Vanishing Cream* (C).

Be

1977 *Bertie Bumpkin* (A). *Chalky* (A). *Uncle*

My Drifter (A).

1972 *The Katts* (C). *Jelly Baby* (C). *Taffee Mosa* (C).

1973 *Shimmy Shrink* (B).

Shiver and Shaka

1973 *Webster* (A). *Beast Fox* (B). *Shaver* (C). *Shaka* (C).

Soggy the Sea Monster (C). *Darned in Distress* (C).

Whoopee

1974 *Toy Boy* (A). *Snap Happy* (C). *Speaker the Ship's Cat* (A).

Fun Fear (C).

1976 *Willy Worry* (B). 1978 *Frankie Stein* (C).

1980 *Calculator Kid* (A). *Wobbermouth* (A).

Monster Fun

1975 *Draculass* (A). *X-Ray Specs* (C). *Mummy's Boy* (C).

1976 *Burns* (C). *Art's Gallery* (C).

Cheeky

1978 *Calculator Kid* (A).

Krazy

1976 *Scaredy Cat* (A).

Jackpot

1980 *Blatche Haggis* (C).

Wow!

1982 *Barney's Bodge* (A).

School Fun

1983 *Top Class Comics* (A).

Nipper

1987 *Double Trouble* (A). *Mighty Mouth* (A).

Gateway Magazine

1994 *Goodbye Twins* (A).

Beano

1991 *Number 13* (C). *Bush Street Kids* (C).

1992 *The Great Goodies* (A).

1993 *The Gorms* (C). *Billy Whizz* (C).

1994 *Bertie Bink* (A). *When the Cat's Away* (A).

1995 *Let the Terrible* (C). *Bush Street Kids* (C).

Dandy

1991 *Winker Watson* (B). *Marty the Cat* (C).

1990 *Buster Crabbe* (A).

Post

The Baves also supplied much work for annuals, summer and winter specials, fun-books and many other formats over the years.

Good Guy
Buster 1983



different writers over the years. When writing action and adventure there's a set formula to work with - life and death struggles et cetera. I think that it's much harder to write humour and go on being funny issue after issue. Looking at your credits, the workload must have been gruelling at times.

Much later - by the 80s - we struggled, often due to drying up and staidness. So it was vital to have support via the editor with new and varied writers, and we have had some superb writers over the years.

C: With the decline of the British comics industry has all the work dried up? If so, how do you fill your time now? I guess what I'm asking in an awkward way is - do you still draw strips for a living or just to keep your hand in?

For the past ten years we have been doing 'Winker Watson' in the *Dandy*, as well as various contributions to the *Beano*, *Fun-size* books, annuals, summer special - all for Thomsons.

Most of this material is scripted by Dundee editorial staff, a though we have created one or two new characters (see credits below).

C: What materials do you use and how fast do you work?

TB: In the 60s and 70s I used art board - Bristol board, Ivorex board. I always used Stein's and Indian ink. I can complete a black and white double-page in a day - colour in an extra day. For colour work today I use Chromacolour. That's what I use on 'Winker Watson'.

C: Looking back over the years - very prolific years, at that! - what were the best, worst and most embarrassing moments?

TB: Embarrassing? Finding that I had missed out on a spelling or suchlike that had made its way into publication.

Worst? When the 'Ginger' strip appeared on TV's *Nationwide* in the '70s - due to a fireworks story. The fire brigade were not amused. Sheila and I watched, speechless.

C: I remember that! I thought at the time that it was just a 'we've-nothing-better-to-do-let's-do-a-these-responsible-comics-feature'. There had been much worse over the years!

C: Thanks for taking the time to answer all the questions. Anything you would like to add? Any future projects?



Draculass
Buster 1976

TB: I am now 70 (Terry Hooper's interview was conducted a couple of years ago. Terry was born in 1931 - Ed.), so two or three days work a week is very nice indeed! To work at home in an environment of our own choice, doing something that I enjoy doing work-wise can't be a that bad!

The comics have been good to me.

Having had so many fan letters over the years has been very heart-warming. Even today, after so many years, we still receive letters from adults who are now telling the children and grandchildren stories about our work.

All Sheila and I would say is, it's fun drawing and keep chucking.

Whilst putting this article together, we received the sad news that Terry Bave had passed away. He will be remembered for the joy he brought to millions of lives through his work.



Ray Aspden looks back to an almost-forgotten character who certainly deserves to be remembered.



OUR ERNIE

MRS ENTWHISTLE'S LITTLE LAD!



Our Ernie appeared in Fleetway's *Knockout* from 1939-1960. Ernie Entwistle (no self-respecting Lancastrian spells it with an 'h', although the *Knockout* a ways did), was originally inspired by Albert Ramsbottom - the lad who got taken to Blackpool, along with his stick with the horses' head and a, 'The best that Woolworth's could sell'. The Pa with walrus moustache and the Ma of ample proportions shown in Hassall's illustrations of the

Holloway Monologues were used in the strip, along with Our Albert's cap.

Ernie lived in Wigan, a town made infamously funny by, among others, George Formby, George Orwell and Uncle Joe's Mint Balls. The strip also embraced the fiction of Wigan having a pier.

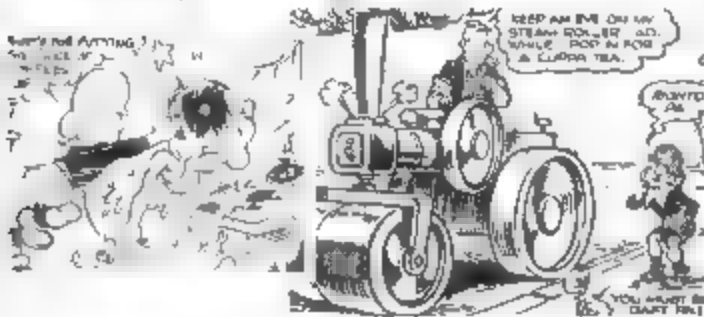
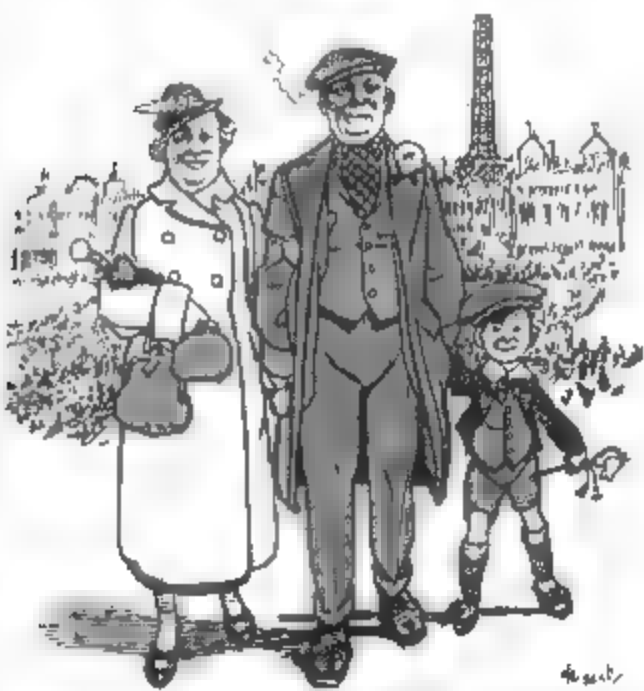
Quite where the lettuce-obsessed, pet caterpillar Charlie came from is not clear, but he was in the strip by issue No. 61. Denis Gifford believed the relationship between Ernie and Charlie was based on Pinocchio and Jimmy Cricket. Whatever his origin, Charlie always had a lot more common sense than Our Ernie ever did. If there was a button to push, a lever to pull, a wild animal to release or a machine hopper to fall into, Our Ernie would do it.

During the War years Our Ernie had several encounters with Hitler, or Ticker as he was called. There was a so-called sister in the strip in those years, but she played little part and eventually faded from view altogether.

Gifford credits Our Ernie with being Fleetway's first truly regional British comic character and the first to have his own catch phrases, rather than those borrowed from the wireless and used in *Radio Fun*. In the final frame Ernie would say, "What's for tea Ma?", but there'd be some problem because of events in the strip and Pa, with an upside-down clay pipe in his mouth (or sometimes it was tucked behind his ear) would utter the immortal line, "Daft I call it!"

Many hands drew Our Ernie, Hugh McNeely, A J Kelly, Gifford himself and Reg Parlett, as well as others whose names are sadly uncredited. Their work is now a scarce commodity, except in annuals from second-hand bookshops or expensive auction lots. All of the artists brought a manic surrealism to Ernie's adventures. Along with the pictures and dialogue were rhyming captions the sort of excruciating doggerel that's probably more fun to write than to read.

Whenever I revisit Our Ernie I have nostalgic memories of my own Lancashire childhood. It reminds me of scabs on grazed knees, summer shows in the pouring rain at Morecambe, *Children's Hour* on the wireless - and I have a little chuckle. ●



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Where it all began



Penelope & I

By Helen D Bennett

It was an ordinary day at the tall, Victorian, red brick building that was my primary school. Outside, the September day in 1966 was cool and grey but inside the atmosphere was bright and familiar.

Today felt different though. It was hard to define at first and as time dragged I realised that my rising feeling of nausea would not allow me to stay much longer. My mother was called to take me home. Within a few minutes we were slowly walking past the small row of shops that separated our house from school. Normally we would call in at least one of them on the way back, my favourite being the newsagents. Its windows were tempting and colourful and crammed with stationery, sweets, greeting cards, small gifts and games, seasonal adverts for Christmas or ice-olies and sometimes boxes of fireworks, but always comics and magazines.

I briefly but longingly gazed at one issue to the fore of the display just as I had done at each passing that week. It was *Lady Penelope* bearing its exciting free gift.

Later that afternoon, still feeling unsettled as my brother arrived home, I was asked if there was anything I would like, my mother was going to the shops. This was a wonderful opportunity, one too good to miss. Within half an hour *Lady Penelope* was handed to me. Not feeling well enough to read it, I simply took out the promised complimentary white handkerchief with its ornate, deep pink, monogrammed P in the corner and felt momentarily soothed.

Next morning, though feeling somewhat better, I was allowed the day off school. As I ate my breakfast I noticed the copy of *Lady Penelope* with that special thrill of remembering a forgotten treat. Quickly flicking through the pages in both directions in my usual haphazard way gave me a fair idea of its contents. I looked at the competition and felt fairly certain of my answers. I carefully filled in the coupon and with some reluctance, cut it out. It didn't seem right that I should have to spoil the magazine while it was still new.

I left the letter for posting to *Lady Penelope* with reasonable hopefulness. Back with my magazine now plus more, I had all day to read about Penelope's mission with Parker, her manservant and 'burglar supreme'. Some popular television programmes appearing as stories included *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and *The Avengers*. They were good television and in the main only on the screen once a week in the 1960s. Seeing and reading about them in a magazine was an inspired idea.

The *Lady Penelope Magazine* was a spin off from *Tv Century 21*. In anticipation of the introduction of *Thunderbirds* to *Tv Century 21*, the story of how Penelope recruits Parker and later how Jeff Tracy, creator of *Thunderbirds*, recruits Penelope is explained. In January 1966 *Thunderbirds* took off in *TV21* and *Lady Penelope* was launched as a magazine with girls in mind. Secretly or otherwise bought or borrowed, I know that boys read and enjoyed it too.

This was an opportunity to develop the Penelope and Parker characters and extend interest in what were initially minor roles in Thunderbirds. Penelope played International Rescue's London Agent and I always thought her appearances a little too fleeting. It seemed to be a common feature of animations around that time. Thunderbirds' Lady Penelope Creighton-Ward, Penny to her friends, was disarmingly beautiful and daring, cultured and chic, vulnerable but strong, and

refreshingly, she didn't scream in a crisis. For girls these were wonderful attributes to aspire to. This Bond style agent was exciting and challenged some entrenched stereotypes. Each action-filled story reinforced her title strip: Elegance, Charm and Deadly Danger. Like the family motto, you could imagine her being toasted reverently with raised glasses and written in Latin beneath the coat of arms above the fireplace. You could hear those low, unrushed seductive words

Lady PENELOPE

147 FLEET STREET, LONDON, E C 4
Telephone: FLEET STREET 997



7th October 1966

Dear Helen,

Guess what... you've WON!

I'm delighted to be writing this letter to tell you that you are one of the winners of the "Fur Coat" competition of Issue 36.

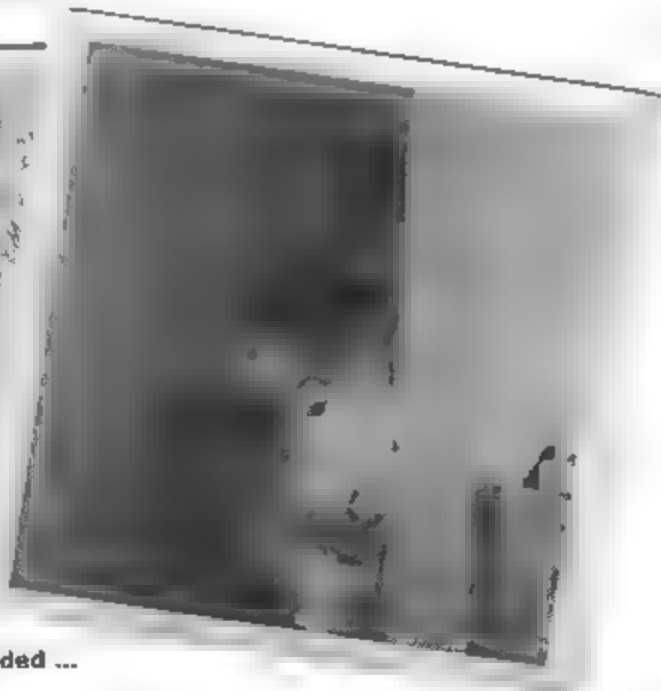
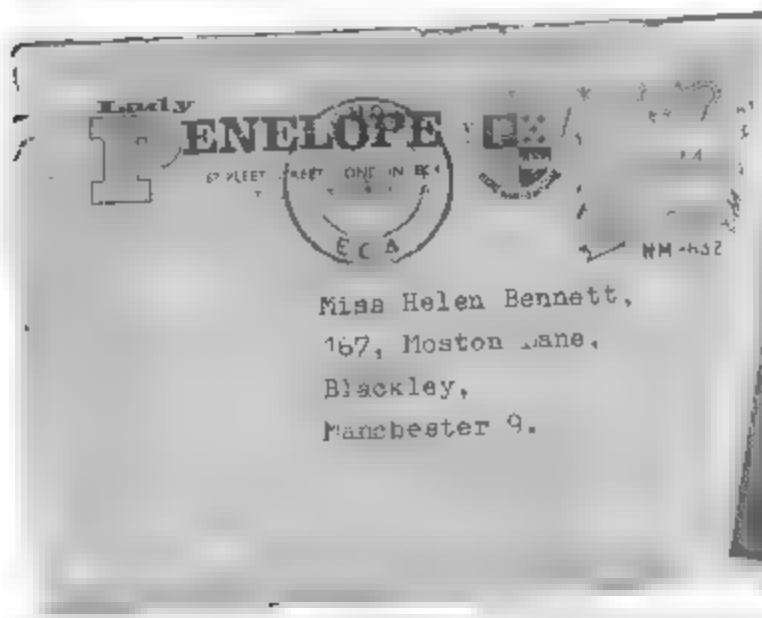
Congratulations! I have ordered your fur coat from Debsons in size 28" and will post it to you within two to four weeks.

I know you will look very nice in it, and I do hope you will continue to enjoy reading my magazine.

Very best wishes,

Penelope C-W

LADY PENELOPE

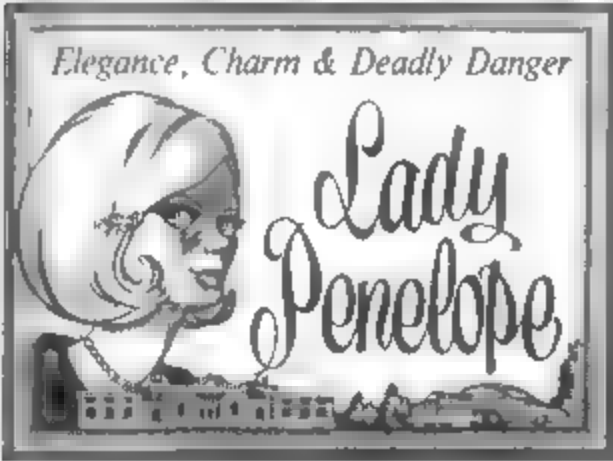
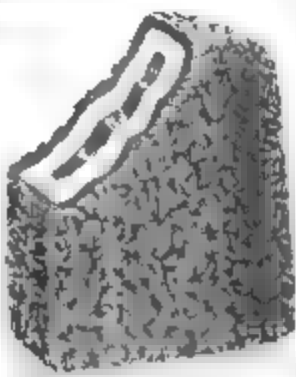


Where it all ended ...



TEN WIN FUR COATS.

A gorgeous Debson's "LUCKY GIRL" fur coat is on its way to each of the winners of the "Fur Coat" competition of issue 36. Their names are Fiona Forbes, Port Glasgow; Veronica Lynch, Welling; Jane Jones, Birmingham; Helen Bennett, Blackley; Natalia Dodic, Coventry; Vanessa Mantle, Shiden; Christine Norman, Styeche; Williams, Livers.



spoken words when you read of her exploits with robot master Mr Steelman and the enemy State of Bereznik or just chatting with the Tracy family

But I could hear the words "Heien, Guess what you've WON!" Those were the words I read when her letter arrived for me. Lady Penelope had replied and the envelope and letter bore the unmistakable heading She had very good news; I had won a fur coat! This definitely ensured that I would continue to read her 'magazine' as she called it. I was hooked and would eat those gaily FAB iced-lollies to prove my allegiance and invent a very exciting life for Sindy. Soon my name appeared in the comic and it felt as though I had achieved something quite important

Some weeks later I was playing out when my mother called me inside. Expecting to dry the dishes, I walked back with some disappointment. Surprisingly on the chair in the living room lay a large, flattish parcel with my name neatly typed on the label. I opened it quickly, folding back layers of white tissue paper and pulling the soft fur up to my face. It felt lovely. We both laughed at the fur pompom buttons that were the size of large snowballs one of which was tagged with a glamorously written Debson's label, detailing the care of Coney fur, rabbit fur, as I understand it. Within seconds I was running upstairs to look at it in the dressing table mirrors where you could see from three sides at once.

Animal rights activists had not yet reached Blackley in Manchester where I lived so I wore the coat both guiltless and guileless though it did attract quite some attention from strangers who would turn

round for another look as I walked past. Who could blame them? Even the family dog was diverted from its fascination with the sheepskin rug in favour of this Coney delight. My family was very proud of me and I was hailed as lucky and went on to back a minor winner in the Grand National Black Secret.

I was encouraged to wear it to show family, friends and neighbours, on trips to town and parties and even to the local grocers' shop where the owners, George and Gertie Williams generously marvelled at it. They were still doing it, to my horror when I was fifteen, telling the other customers my story while we queued.

Just over a year later the school Christmas party seemed a suitable event to wear a fur coat and a new dress with the latest, up to the minute fashion accessory, beads which dangled on the ends of the tie belt. The party, the outfit the unsteady feeling you have when you wear new shoes suitable only for dancing proved too much in the icy tarmacked playground and and I slipped uncontrollably onto my back. With beads hanging I realised the coat's days were numbered. I kept it until I was eighteen but I still love to come across my special letter and the photo of me wearing it, which I store with my keepsakes.

Lady Penelope is fabulous and the stories, characters, memories and of course the fur coat were fantastic gifts to be given for which I am very thankful ●

My Comic Saturday

by Glenn B. Fleming



I was fortunate to have two older brothers when I was growing up, in fact I still have two older brothers who are now fully grown up + I'm just not sure about myself. When I was a kid, they both bought comics and

as I could spend my own money on the comic and the movies and other delusions. Life was a lot simpler then and I had the best and a kid could have. My middle brother Martin was always a soft touch and would come out and read his comics before he did protest to or indication of other great fun for me or other things. He was like General Jarvis was showing up that particular week. I wouldn't let anyone read my comics before I'd at least looked at them, maybe that tells you something about me.

Reading those early comics the *Valiant*, *Swampy* and *Johnny*, with comic-like eyes popping out of my head, must have been something to behold. All of my school mates, I became the hero, whether he be a *Swampy*, *Johnny*, a *Footballer* or even a *Spider* girl. In our play at school and after.

Most of the comics were bought on a Saturday, hence the title of this article, but come, the *Swampy* and *Johnny* came out on Monday and Tuesday respectively. Sometimes my brother and I had to wait until the following Saturday to buy them, the paperwork came, keeping them under his counter for us. The back of that counter must have been either like the *TARDIS* or *Doctor's Cove* perhaps both + everybody's comic was held behind it, the shop keeper casually reading down and producing the next issue you wanted without even

asking. Maybe he had special powers, or more like he'd just finished reading it as you came to the shop.

Art for Art's Sake

As I was always drawing at school and home (drawing is the only thing I remember doing when I was small) it was inevitably the artwork that caught my attention over the words. Even at that early age I always felt that the words were just scenery, added to put a name to a hero or villain, a place or situation. The words were never that important. If there had been no pictures at all, it would have been a book and, at that age, that would have been no fun at all.

That said, most of the artwork for the *Swampy* stories was always rather 'twee', without the smooth, even line of the cartoons. I didn't realize it then, but that was to do with light and shade and texture the artists were trying to put into their world-making and it's a shame the then printing process wasn't up to the standard of the artwork. I'd love to see those stories re-printed on better quality stock of paper sometime, but I have to admit that will happen as artwork that was thrown away (as you believe that?) after the film had been made for the printing and therefore not much survives today.

Some of the actual storylining was a little dodgy at times and the perspective occasionally slipped but on the whole these illustrations, standing or not, burned an indelible mark in my young head.

Payneful Memories

John's 'Paddy Payne' was always a favourite of mine, but not because he was a fighter pilot, but because the drawings were so good. The illustrations were characterful and life-like as opposed to the cartoonish efforts of most of the other stories. One Paddy Payne story!

(Below) TV21 artist Mike Noble shows just how to illustrate an explosion!

A JANUARY EVENING
24
ELLIOT ISLAND
SOUTH PACIFIC SITE OF
SECRET RESEARCH NETWORK
STATION NUMBER 1
STAFFED ENTIRELY BY
ROBOTS AND COMPUTERS



THE COLOSSAL COMMANDO COULD ONLY HAVE ONE STATION TO THE PAIN
HIS FAITH HAD A HE SHOOT IN THE POWER OF A "RAGIN' FURY"

GREAT WHIRLIN' WINDJAMMERS! TRY TO BLOW UP MY SHIPMATES WOULD YOU? IF IT'S POINTS YOU'RE SO KEEN ON I'M ABOUT TO SCORE A FEW MYSELF!

KER-LUNK!

WE'LL START WITH YOU SCORRER ENDS

HIMMEL OOF!

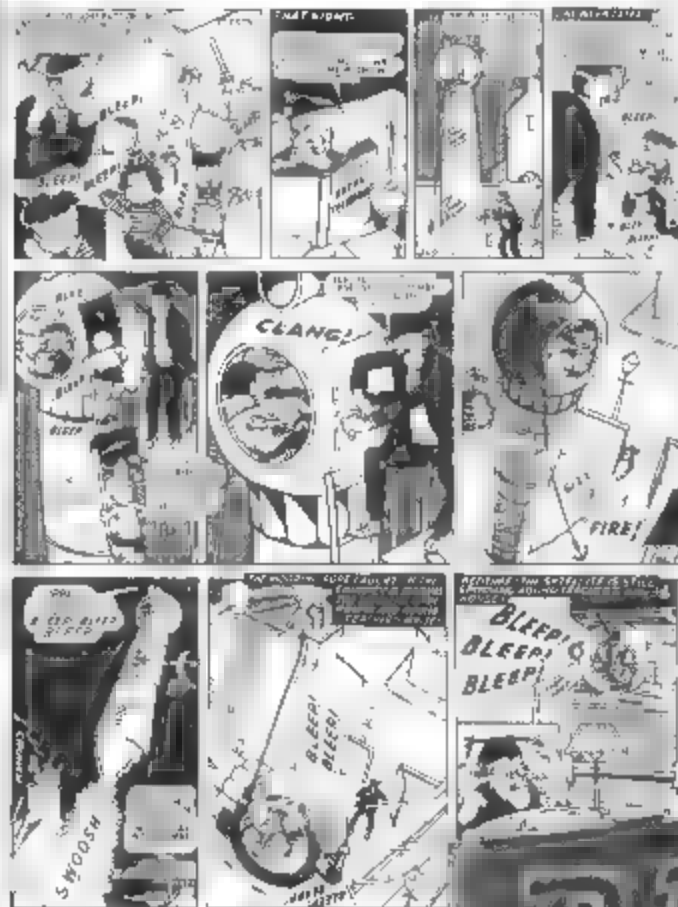
LION

PADDY PAYNE'S

Hurricane's Lexicon

"Captain Hurricane" must rank as one of the most on-PC strips ever produced. He was always fighting "Terrible Little Men" or "Superheroes" or "Blue Skinned Devils". But, the strip did introduce us young 'uns to another language. My brothers and I and our friends could all shout 'Gott in Himmel!' and 'Donner und Blitzen' as well as any 'Jerry' could. It also taught me bad language. Captain Hurricane's batman was called Maggott Malone and, at the sight of a Jerry Puma, would produce Lammot, which I thought was pronounced "Loom". To think that barely two years previously, I

THE BASH STREET KIDS



Wentworth was telling the United States Senate that comics were uneducational and turning the majority of American youth into juvenile delinquents. He was quite correct as I distinctly remember my brother and I taking my father (who'd been a paratrooper on D-Day) where we could buy a Panzer tank!

In 1964, at the age of nine, my friend Paul bought the first edition of *Ranger*. I was devastated. I had already spent my pocket money and had to ask my dad if he would get me the *Ranger* when he went to work. I knew my mum would give him hell because she reckoned we had too many comics anyway. My dad would always come through in times like this and I believe that is the role of any good father: to provide what the children need and what they want. And what more could you give a kid back then? That Monday, my dad pushed the *Ranger* under my eager eyes and whispered to take it upstairs and make it in with the rest. I did, but he still got his ear bashed by my mother.

I remember how one particular year my dad told the newspaper to save our comics until he came back from holiday and on our return we had three weeks worth to go over! Dad got his ear bashed for that, too. I believe that after his perilous parachute jump into Normandy and

D-Day, my dad was of the opinion that life was too short to complain that the kids had too many comics.

Proper Art

In that issue of *Ranger* Paul showed me was the awesome 'Trigan Empire', beautifully drawn by, I learned much, much later, artist Don Lawrence. His artwork was produced in full colour and I was amazed by it. Lawrence actually used paints on the artwork and when I mentioned this 'painted artwork' to my dad, he didn't know the difference between that and the other black and white stuff. I'd catch him looking at what my mum wasn't around.

Around about then one of my brother's friends introduced me to Eagle, though it didn't last for me. (TV2) came along and that was it. All my favourite Anderson shows under the same banner.

These comics of the sixties were, to me, perfectly storytelling, composition, rendering and expression of colour. Tell that to today's artists and I bet half of them won't understand most of it nor am I showing my age? •

RANGER

THE NATIONAL BOYS MAGAZINE

The Death of an Aircraft -
IT REALLY HAPPENED!
Astounding real life
photos inside





Did you ever finish reading a comic and just wanted the experience to go on that little bit longer? Then you remember you haven't read **EVERYTHING**. You haven't read all the ads! You **MIGHT** decide to collect stamps. And what's that funny bit of small writing telling you who owns the company who publishes the comic and where to buy it in Australia and something about South Africa?

If you have tried to follow the ownership history of British comics you're a better man than we are. Steve Holland **IS** a better man - but has he figured it all out?

By then they were known as ...

by Steve Holland

The title might be an odd one but it's a phrase I've come to loath. I know I'm going to have to use it in a most any article I write about comics that isn't about characters appearing out of Dundee where DC Thomson & Co. have saved me a ton of ink and explanation by sticking with the same name since they were founded in 1905.

My first childhood comics were published by Fleetway Publications. But when I got around to writing out that little coupon which would reserve you your comics each week at the local newsagent, they weren't Fleetway any more.

By then they were known as IPC Magazines. In 1974 I swapped *Valiant* for *Speed & Power* published by IPC Transport Press, just to confuse things further) but I never gave up comics entirely because I read *Vulcan* and *Action* over the next couple of years. 1977 saw the launch of *2000AD*, and 1982 brought *Warrior*. By the mid-1980s I was buying more comics

than when I was a kid. But before long they weren't being published by IPC any more, they were from Fleetway Publications and I was a 'Fleetway kid' again. But only for a decade because by then they were known as Egmont Fleetway.

Confusing

When I started researching older comics from the 1950s and early 1960s things



Harold Harmsworth

got even more confusing because I had to deal with Hulton Press, Longacre Press, Odhams Press. And they were all the same company, owned by the same people who were known as Fleetway Publications - which was owned by the company who owned the *Daily Mirror* who had taken over the Amalgamated Press.

You see, the people who published the *Daily Mirror* had bought Amalgamated Press from the people who published the *Daily Telegraph* who had bought it from

the people who published the *Daily Mail* who were the people who launched the *Daily Mirror*.

To put it another way, the guys who started the comics boom back in the late 19th century were called Harmsworth but were later called Northcliffe and Rothermere. Rothermere sold the company to two guys called Berry who were later called Camrose and Kemsley - and they sold it to a guy called Cecil King who was the nephew of Northcliffe and Rothermere, formerly the Harmsworth brothers.

King didn't change his name, by the way.

He was succeeded by Hugh Cudlipp who only added a title (Baron) but who sold some of the comics to Robert Maxwell whose real name was Ján Ludvík Hoch.



Viscount Camrose

Slow down, Poindexter!

Let's start again.

Alfred Harmsworth and his brother Harold were the founders of *Comic Cuts* and *Illustrated Chips* in 1890.

They also launched the *Daily Mail* in 1896 and the *Daily Mirror* in 1903.

The Harmsworth Brothers also owned Answers Ltd, Pandora Publishing, Geraldine Press and various other subsidiary companies. It was the bringing together of these various subsidiary companies that created the Amalgamated Press in 1901.

Alfred Harmsworth became Lord Northcliffe in 1905 and flogged his shares in the *Daily Mirror* to his brother in 1913. He became Lord Rothermere in 1919.

Rothermere's *Daily Mirror Newspapers* bought the *Daily Sketch* from Sir Edward Hulton in 1920.

Lord Northcliffe died in 1922. Lord Rothermere sold the



Northcliffe



Robert Maxwell

Daily Sketch to William and Gomer Berry of Allied Newspapers in 1925. The following year, the Berry brothers bought the Amalgamated Press.

In 1927, they merged various magazines published by Cassell (another company they owned) into the Amalgamated Press. William Berry became Lord Camrose in 1929 and his brother became Lord Kemsley in 1936.

Daily Mirror Newspapers, under chairman Cecil King, subsequently bought the Amalgamated Press from Camrose and Kemsley in 1959 and renamed the group Fleetway Publications.

Getting there

Now, Sir Edward Hulton had published the *Daily Sketch* until he sold it to Rothermere who offloaded it to the Berry brothers who published it through a subsidiary company of Allied Newspapers, founded by Northcliffe and Rothermere.

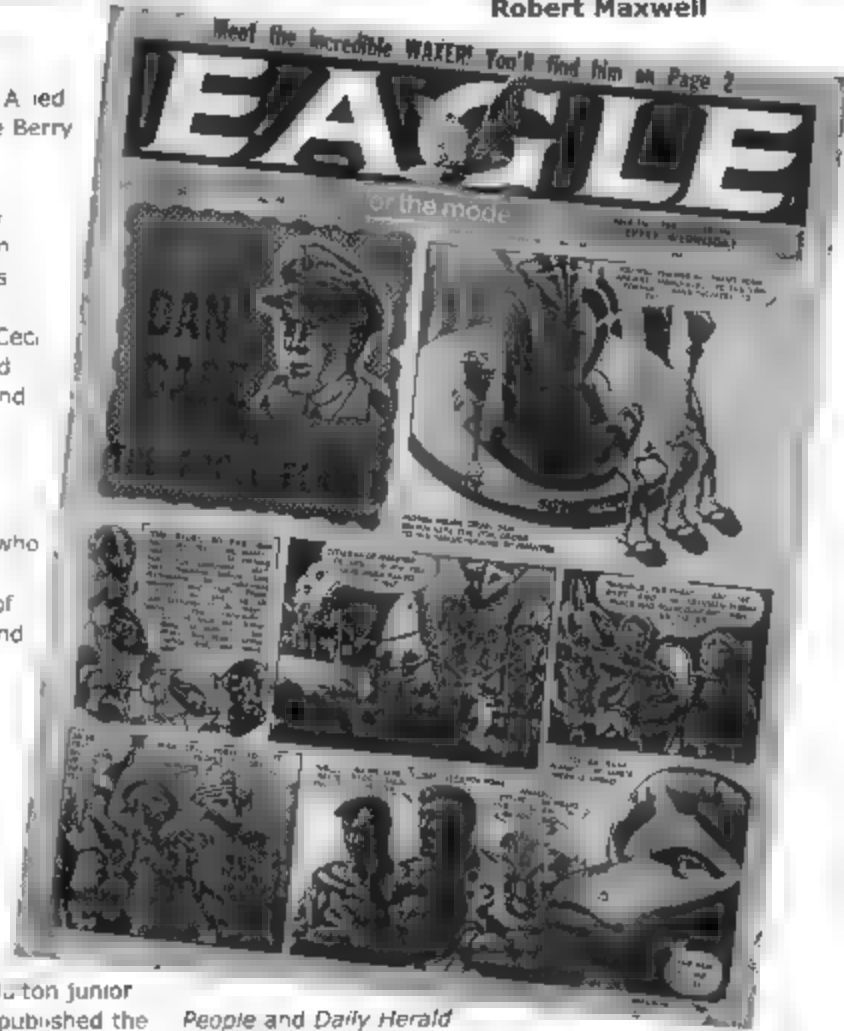
But by then it was known as the *Daily Graphic*, of course.

They sold that to Associated Newspapers, founded by Northcliffe and Rothermere who wanted a rival to the *Daily Mirror*, founded by Northcliffe and Rothermere, but it struggled for a while and was eventually merged with the *Daily Mail*, founded by Northcliffe and Rothermere.

But by then it was known as the *Daily Sketch*, of course. And that's how Edward Hulton junior got the money to found Hulton Press, who published the *Eagle*. For a while.

Odd tale

Two months after Daily Mirror Newspapers bought the Amalgamated Press, Hulton Press was bought by Odhams Press. Odhams, founded as Odhams Ltd., had become Odhams Press when Odhams Ltd. merged with John Bull Ltd. in 1920. They published the *Sunday*



People and Daily Herald

In 1959, Odhams took over George Newnes which, by then, had absorbed C. Arthur Pearson. This meant there were two very large publishers vying for the lucrative women's magazines market and Cecil King suggested to Odhams' chairman Christopher Chance or that they should rationalise the crowded market. Chance or thought this might be an attempt at a takeover and approached Roy Thomson of Thomson Newspapers (who



Cecil King & George Brown

have nothing to do with D. C. Thomson) and suggested a possible merger. King reacted by making an outright offer for Odhams which was accepted in 1961.

Thus Fleetway absorbed magazines from Newnes and Pearsons, although the Hulton Press comics (who by then were known as Longacre Press) were kept as a slightly separate fiefdom, soon to be renamed Odhams Press.

DON'T LOSE IT AGAIN

**Vote
for
them**



VOTE

"Here you are—don't lose it again."

Murdoch and Maxwell

International Publishing Corporation Ltd (IPC) was formed to implement the merger of Daily Mirror Newspapers and Sunday Pictorial Magazines Ltd. in 1963, although it wasn't until 1969 that IPC rationalised the various comics groups and they all became publications of IPC Magazines.

IPC had inherited problems: they relaunched the *Daily Herald* as *The Sun* but sales collapsed and *The Sun* was sold off to Rupert Murdoch who relaunched the title to compete directly with the *Daily Mirror*. The Daily Mirror Newspapers Ltd, Odhams Newspapers Ltd and various



other newspaper publishing divisions became IPC Newspapers Ltd in 1968.

Industrial disputes in the late 1960s saw IPC's profits fall and the company was taken over by the Reed Group in 1970. Reed promptly became Reed International. Mirror Group Newspapers was created in 1974 bringing together all of Reed's newspapers assets whilst IPC Magazines retained all of the magazines.

The Mirror Group was sold to Robert Maxwell in 1984. In the early 1980s IPC had begun breaking down their juvenile magazines into groups to separate the successful girls' magazines from the ageing weekly comics. The latter, known as the IPC Magazines Youth Group, was sold to Maxwell's Pergamon BPCC Publishing Corporation in 1987 who renamed his new acquisition Fleetway Publications.

Phew!

Heir apparent

I'm sure that most of you will know what happened next. Maxwell was setting up a joint venture company with Fleetway and the Danish company Gutenberghus when he drowned.

Egmont took on the other 50% of the company and after various changes of imprint (Fleetway Editions, Egmont Fleetway, Egmont Magazines) the last surviving titles - *2000AD* and *Judge Dredd Magazine* - are now published by Rebellion.

So who is the son and heir of the original Harmsworth Brothers company?

Could it be Rebellion? After all they publish the last surviving comic produced by IPC Magazines.

Well, no, because there has been so much shuffling of assets and name changes with n companies for the last three decades that it's like playing "Find the Lady" with a very accomplished conman. What is now IPC Magazines Ltd used to be called IPC Media Ltd and what used to be called IPC Magazines Ltd (note the full stops) and who are now IPC Media Ltd, well, they used to be... bring those violins to a crescendo... George Newnes Ltd - the Harmsworths' great rivals.

Of course, during these changes, IPC Magazines were sold by Reed International (by then they were known as Reed Elsevier) to venture capitalist company Cinven who sold the company to Time Inc., the magazine arm of AOL Time Warner Inc.

However, it's all a bit of a shaggy dog question really because the original Amalgamated Press ceased to exist years ago. What the Berry brothers bought in 1926 was The Amalgamated Press (1922) Ltd., set up by Harold Harmsworth after his brother's death.

Maybe we could just start calling them Amalgamated IPC. It would save a lot of explanation. ●

Thrills, Chills, Spills from yesteryear!

RADIO- active

Listen to the original shows from the Golden Age of Radio. These are recordings of the original broadcasts made from the 1930s to the 1950s. In some cases complete with period ads and station announcements. It's like having your very own time machine as the Theatre of the Mind transports you back to the golden period, pioneering and mysterious days of yesteryear.

Start your vintage radio library today! Over the months to come we will continue with some of the shows and introduce other genres such as western, variety shows and sitcoms.

We expect what your mind is craving... Satisfaction will have something for you!

SUPERHERO

The Shadow

The poorest pulp hero brought to life in his own radio serial from the 1940s. Over ten hours of crime-fighting adventure and mystery with the man "who knows".

Doc Savage

'The Man of Bronze' in two great radio serials complete on one disk. This recording features the adventures 'Pearl Cay' and the six-part '1000 Handed Man' - over six hours of super hero action and adventure.

COMEDY

Abbott and Costello

At the height of their fame Abbott and Costello attracted some of the greatest guest stars and writers. Over ten hours of comedy, vaudeville and Americana.

HORROR

Lights Out

One of the greatest radio horror thriller shows of them all. Over ten hours of stand alone stories of macabre mystery and spine-tingling suspense.

SCIENCE FICTION

X minus 1

Perhaps the finest science fiction radio serial ever! Over ten hours of stand-alone stories adapted from the work of best-loved SF authors.

Space Patrol

Join Commander Sam Carr and the crew of his spaceship in one of the earliest on-going SF serials. Over ten hours of outlandish adventures in the spaceways of the Solar System.

CLASSIC MOVIES

Lux Theatre

'Live from Hollywood...' with adaptations of current movies from the 1930s in radio form. Over ten hours of famous movies - often with the original stars - in 60 minute versions of classic films.

ADVENTURE

Escape

Brilliantly original half-hour stories written to take the listener to the remote, mysterious locales around the world. Over ten hours of crime and mystery with a twist in the tale to keep you on the edge of your seat.

CRIME

Miss Carter

One of radio's most popular private detectives. Over ten hours of brilliantly crafted and played crime stories that give you the clues and challenge you to solve the case.

DRAMA

Theatre 5

A little-known anthology show that featured some of the great names from television and film. Over ten hours of crime, psychological drama, mystery, comedy and just about anything else the writers dreamed up in this free-for-all slot.

Each disc contains a collection of shows in MP3 format. Playback is by an MP3 player, computer or through most modern DVD players.

Buy more... save more!

1 disc = £3.50

2 discs = £5.00 each

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Please note: these shows are available from the original recordings but should be treated as loans rather than gifts. Our amazing quality sound, some portions of the recordings are edited for clarity and content of shows does regularly change. A small portion of the shows have been lost to time and we can not get back to our original masters.

We each have a personal real-life comic hero. An artist, writer – or if you are really geeky, an editor or letterer – who transformed the way you enjoyed comics. This is the slot for you to let the world know who it was who set you along the path from average comic reader to comic strip nut. For details of how to send your suggestions, go to www.crikeyuk.co.uk and click on submissions.

This time around we have Glenn B Fleming's thoughts and confessions about the great

RON Embleton

Even as a 10-year-old, I could see that there was something rather special about Ron Embleton's artwork. The clue for me was the way he depicted, of all things, finger nails.

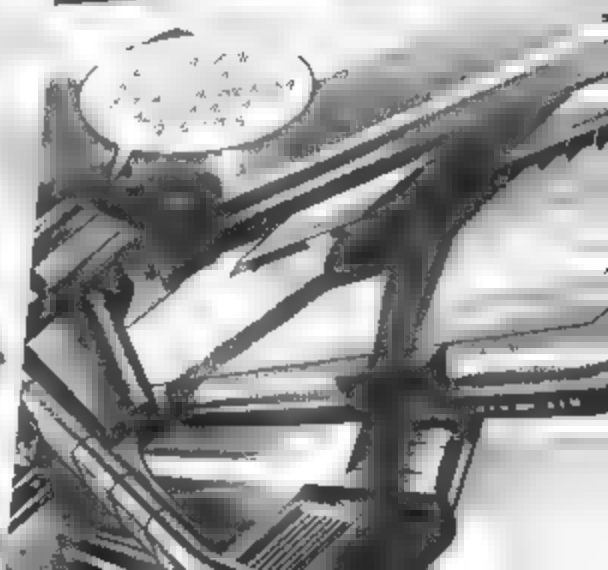
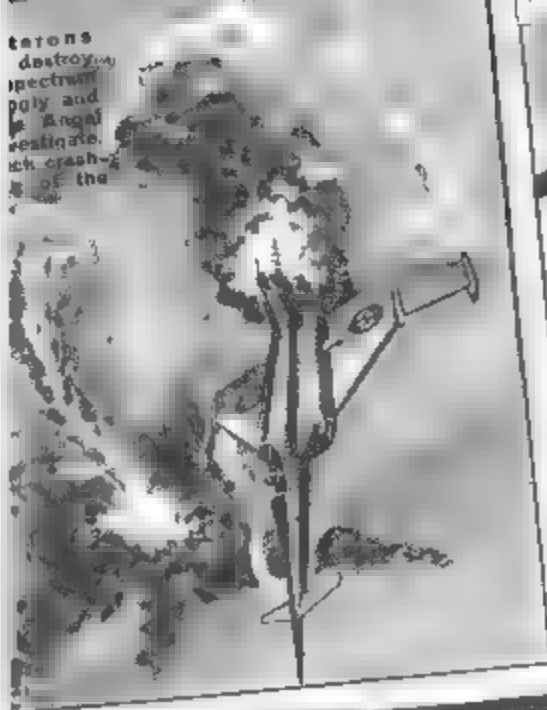
Ron would just paint them. Rarely using a hard line to show them. Most artists would either spoil their drawing by putting that line in and some would leave them out altogether. Ron? Well, Ron would just use a lighter shade of paint.

Stung

I first saw Ron's work on 'Stingray' in TV21 Titan's Terror Fish exploding from jagged panels. The most tangible spray from Stingray's propellers and, notably, the double-page fully painted spreads.

Even before Frank Beamy arrived in the TV21 fold with his masterful depiction of Thunderbirds, Embleton was drawing the Anderson characters as 'real people' slowly falling under the spell of Marvel Comics from

Captain Scarlet races across the ocean in his Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle (SPV).





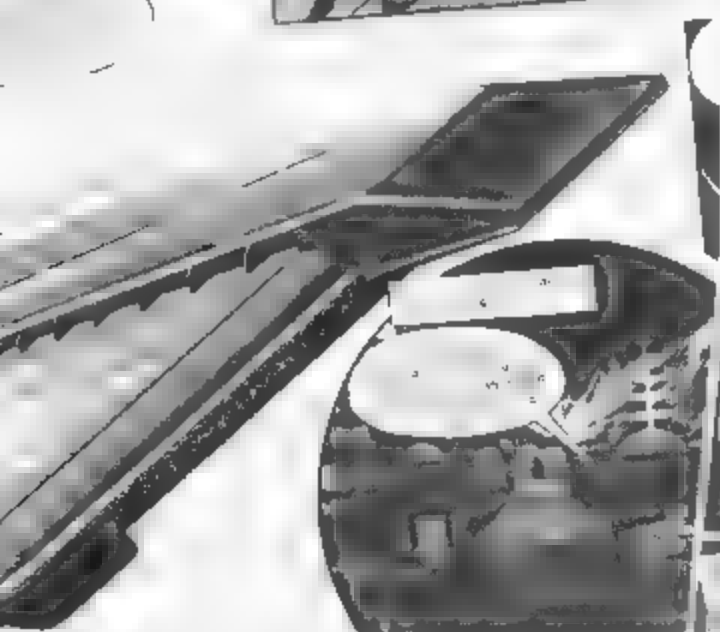
America, I was enjoying these 'realistic' drawings and stories more than cartoons. The realism, rendering and characters seemed that much more accessible.

Astounded that an artist could paint a strip in full colour, rather than just in black and white, it did my little eyes no small damage - wide-eyed and a most reckless, I was hooked and just couldn't get enough of this wonderful artwork.

Gifted

Ronald Sydney Emberton was born in London in October 1930. He was a tremendously gifted artist and illustrator whose work became much admired by just about everyone - fans, publishers and editors alike.

Ron submitted his first cartoon at the age of nine and aged 12, won a national poster competition.



Following his successful run on *Stingray* (right), Ron took over the helm of Gerry Anderson's then latest production *Captain Scarlet and The Mysterons* (above and left).



After training at the South East Essex Technical College and School of Art (studying painting under the guidance of expressionist painter David Bomberg) he worked in a commercial studio for six months during which time he began freelancing comic strips to independent publishers.

Embleton was one of those people who, apart from his first position, never seemed to be employed by anyone full-time, enjoying the freedom of freelancing his trade, choosing what to work on and when to work on it until his death.

Ron was just beginning to establish himself as he turned 18 when he was called up for his National Service. Embleton suddenly found himself deep in the jungles of Malaya, probably wearing some of the uniforms he had so neatly rendered and yomping through terrain as exotic as some of the strips he'd been working on!

Amalgamated

Leaving the army in 1950, Embleton set up his own studio with a school friend Terry Patrick and James Bleach, whom Patrick knew from life-drawing classes. The three quickly established themselves with various independent publishers - Scion, TV Boardman and Norman Light amongst others. Embleton also began

contributing to many of Amalgamated Press' publications.

Even in those early times, Embleton was a busy and much sought after man.

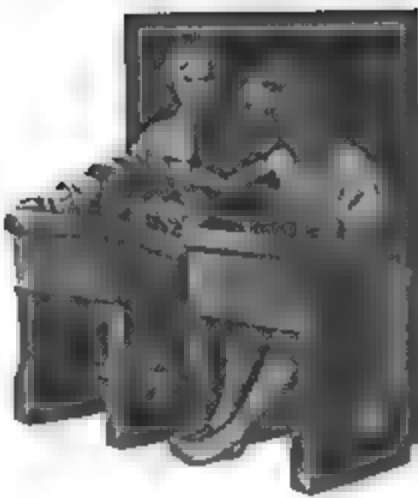
During this period he drew strips for *Mickey Mouse Weekly* and *Express Weekly*, where he took over the artwork of 'Wulf the Briton'. This would prove to be a turning point for Ron. 'Wulf' had been drawn by many artists before Embleton's arrival and he immediately criticised the way the strip was written. So he did what anybody would do - he began writing the strip as well, pushing the character forward in

a manner not seen before.

It was on 'Wulf' that he developed his techniques for working in colour, creating some 300 pages of meticulously painted artwork during a four-year run on the strip from 1956 to 1960. For me, it may be this strip that he will be best remembered for (or maybe it will be *Stingray*, but that was still several years away).

Express Weekly was printed in photogravure on good quality paper and was therefore able to do full justice to Ron's superb colour work. Aware of this process, Embleton obviously relished the chance to draw the full-page battle scenes that appeared on many covers of *Express Weekly* and as his research was second to none, this culminated in the finest renderings of warriors and such like. Not content with that, Embleton also lettered the strip, thus producing a 'complete' piece of artwork.

An example of Ron Embleton's stunning perspective work can be seen in this spot-illl from *Look and Learn*.



Historic
Embleton's love of historical characters and settings served him well with later strips drawing 'Wrath of the Gods' and Johnny Frog amongst others. Although Ron loved historical settings he was equally at home with adventure strips such as

Biggles and his science fiction rendering of Stingray in *TV Century 21*.

Though he didn't particularly enjoy drawing the Anderson strips, Embleton was so well thought of by puppet master Gerry Anderson that he was later commissioned to provide the stunning artwork which appeared in the closing credits of ITV's *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons*. Embleton also worked on the Captain Scarlet strip though for me, his style was too similar to that of the Stingray years. fantastic though it was.

Looking and learning

Embleton was also a prolific contributor to *Look and Learn*, producing illustrations for numerous series. In 1969 he produced a fill-in story in the long running 'Trigan' Empire strip. Embleton also produced illustrations for titles aimed at younger children and numerous books. He just couldn't stop drawing and painting and it was his painting that was coming to the fore.

In 1960 Ron was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters and the National Society of Painters and Sculptors and his work was being exhibited throughout the world. By the early 1970s he had moved completely away from comics work to concentrate on historical illustrations. He produced a series of paintings sold as prints for framing with titles like Children's Street Games and Old London Street Traders. He also painted a series of Characters from Dickens for *This England* magazine.



(Right) Another example of Ron Embleton's stunning figure drawing, again from *Look and Learn*.





Classic

In 1972 Embleton began a long association with Newcastle publisher Frank Graham and the union turned out to be extremely lucrative for both artist and publisher. Ron had met Graham in the late 1960s and sent him samples of his work, completely bowling Graham over with his paintings. Later, Ron provided over 140 paintings of the Northeast to illustrate Graham's publications.

Among this work are some 80 pictures of life on Hadrian's Wall during the Roman occupation. Embleton also produced 15 paintings of the Farnes Islands and their birds, local places and local characters. If this were not enough, he produced another 80 coloured plates and over one hundred black and white drawings for twelve booklets on Roman life which have sold more than 50,000 copies worldwide. One particular painting of life at Housestead Fort, produced and sold as a postcard, has sold more than one million copies. Total sales of his series of postcards of Roman life are well in excess of six million.

In 1984, Frank Graham produced

a hardback volume entitled *Hadrian's Wall in the Days of the Romans* which is packed with Embleton's paintings and illustrations. Ron Embleton's illustrations are among the most authentic reconstructions of Roman life ever produced.



(Above and below). More Look & Learn brilliance from the brush of Ron Embleton. Note the tones on the skin of the warrior above and rendering of the eagle's feathers...

Stripped

In a sudden, but successful, return to the comic strip format in 1973, he produced the erotic satire strip (no pun intended) 'Oh Wicked Wanda' for *Penthouse Magazine*. This ran for the next seven years, showing us all that he could draw and paint the most beautiful of women as we

This was followed by another erotic strip 'Sweet Chastity', this time written by Penthouse founder Bob Guccione

Embleton was working on one of these strips when he died of a heart attack on 13 February 1988. He was 57 years old

Realistic

Embleton was truly a giant of the comics, producing nothing but stunning art for any and all types of strips and spot illustrations

Although I have yet to see it, a complete inventory of his work would make compelling reading as his early work spanned the crucial two post-war decades of adventure-strip development in this country

British comics were 'growing up' in this period and significantly moving away from the generally poorly drawn '30s and '40s format to embrace a more American-led, realistic cinematic style of storytelling

Cinema had become the template for mass media sequential art, close-ups, high and low shots, perspective, colour, shade and realistic rendering of human anatomy was suddenly employed in storytelling

British comics (and, like me, their readers) would never be the same and Ron Embleton was at the forefront of that movement. Unlike the TV actor who rarely goes on to become a major star in film, Ron Embleton went from 'owly' comic strip artist to renowned oil painter in a career that was tragically cut short.

Or maybe there was just nothing left for Ron to draw and paint. ●

Ron Embleton could draw anything - from Lewis Carroll's *The Walrus and the Carpenter* (below) to the battle of Agincourt (right), and just about everything in between.



THE FIRST SPACE-AGE WEEKLY

Week Ending 12th May, 1956, No. 4

A News of the World Publication

ROCKET

By Brian M Clarke

For the rest of the world the Space Age began on 4 October 1957 with the launch of the Soviet Sputnik – but for British comic readers it really began 14 April 1956 when issue one of Eagle introduced us to our first proper space hero, Dan Dare. Since then the Pilot of the Future has certainly had the lion's share of coverage when it comes to talking about British space heroes.

Looking back at Eagle, however, the space elements were pretty thin on the ground. It wasn't until six years later that Britain's first true 'space age' comic hit the newsstands.



Blast Off!

Science fiction heroes and storylines have been a staple of comics from way back. Many were Flash Gordon clones in the style of Swift Morgan, Space Ace and Don Conquest. Some, like the bizarre Professor Radium from Puck in the early 1900s, were weird navel gazing exercises about strange possible super-science inventions. There had even been titles devoted to scientific speculation such as *Modern Boy* (1930s). What there had never been, however, was a single title devoted in its entirety to science fiction adventures and fact.

Not until 21 April 1956

Edited by Battle of Britain flying ace Sir Douglas Bader, *Rocket* was an over-sized quality publication with one of the best logos ever to grace a comic cover. Published by The News of the World (stop laughing at the back!) it was a photogravure weekly with a mission to make space exploration and science intelligible, entertaining and profitable.

Captain Falcon

Rocket's equivalent of Dan Dare was Captain Falcon, chief of Moon Base

Patrol. He began his *Rocket* space career in the Patrol Ship Beta but by issue two he had been upgraded to the more powerful Space Patrol Cruiser The Hawk.

Created by Frank Black, the strip followed the juvenile SF formula of brainy super-pilot do-gooder taking two teenage trainees out to learn the ropes. And of course they had nicknames. Some a bit harder than others. 'Crash' Kale was all right for a space hero but not too many people might want to trust their lives to a cadet called 'Sparrow' Smith.

Captain Falcon's adventures may have been pulpy – fighting despots on the moon, conducting rescue missions on the jungle world of Venus – but the full colour artwork carried it off with verve and finesse. Artist Black opened up the page with large panel layouts that made the best of the space action. His composition could even find excitement in just a couple of talking heads. He had the ability to always find an action to be done even if the crew were just congratulating themselves on a bit of nice comet shooting.



ON THIS DATE, MARCH 1956 TO 1962

THE MODERN BOY





JOHN STORM IN TARMAC BASE

While on a height test with the new Harnet, John Storm has an adventure out of his world - the report of which is now being read by the author. See below the story to see what happened to John Storm on his first flight into space.

The Seabed Citadel successfully located the awe and wonder of space travel to the weird depths of our own oceans.

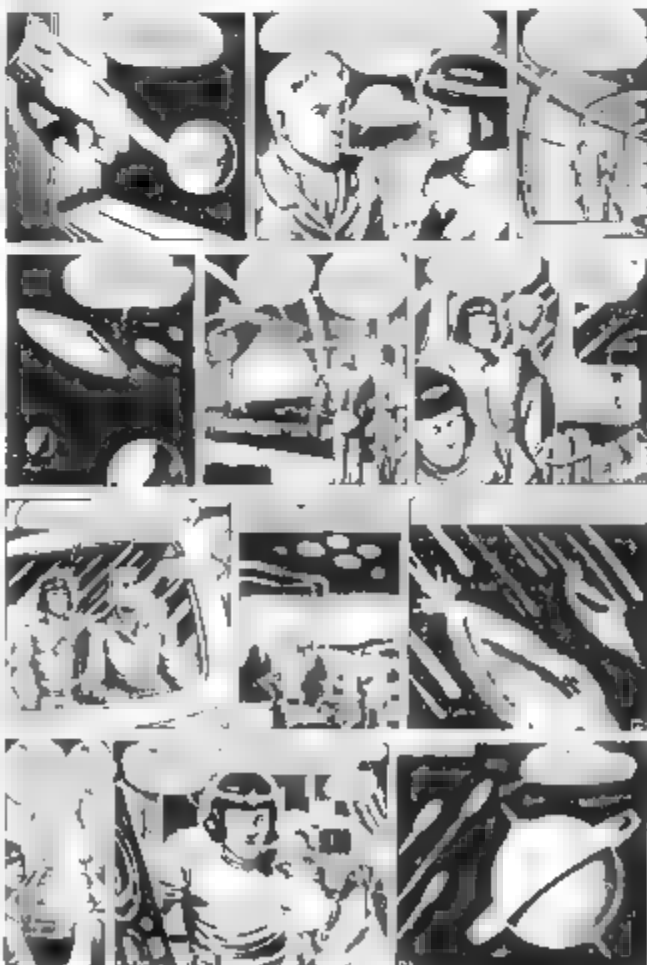
According to British comics historian Denis Gifford, Captain Falcon took "its inspiration from *Eagle*, (and) came across as an imitid variation of Dan Dare". It's certainly true that Black's artwork lacked the verisimilitude of a Frank Hampson but by ditching the draftsmanship in favour of dynamic layouts and fast moving, highly inventive scripts, 'Captain Falcon' remains an undiscovered classic of the Brits-in-Space period.

Strip Mining

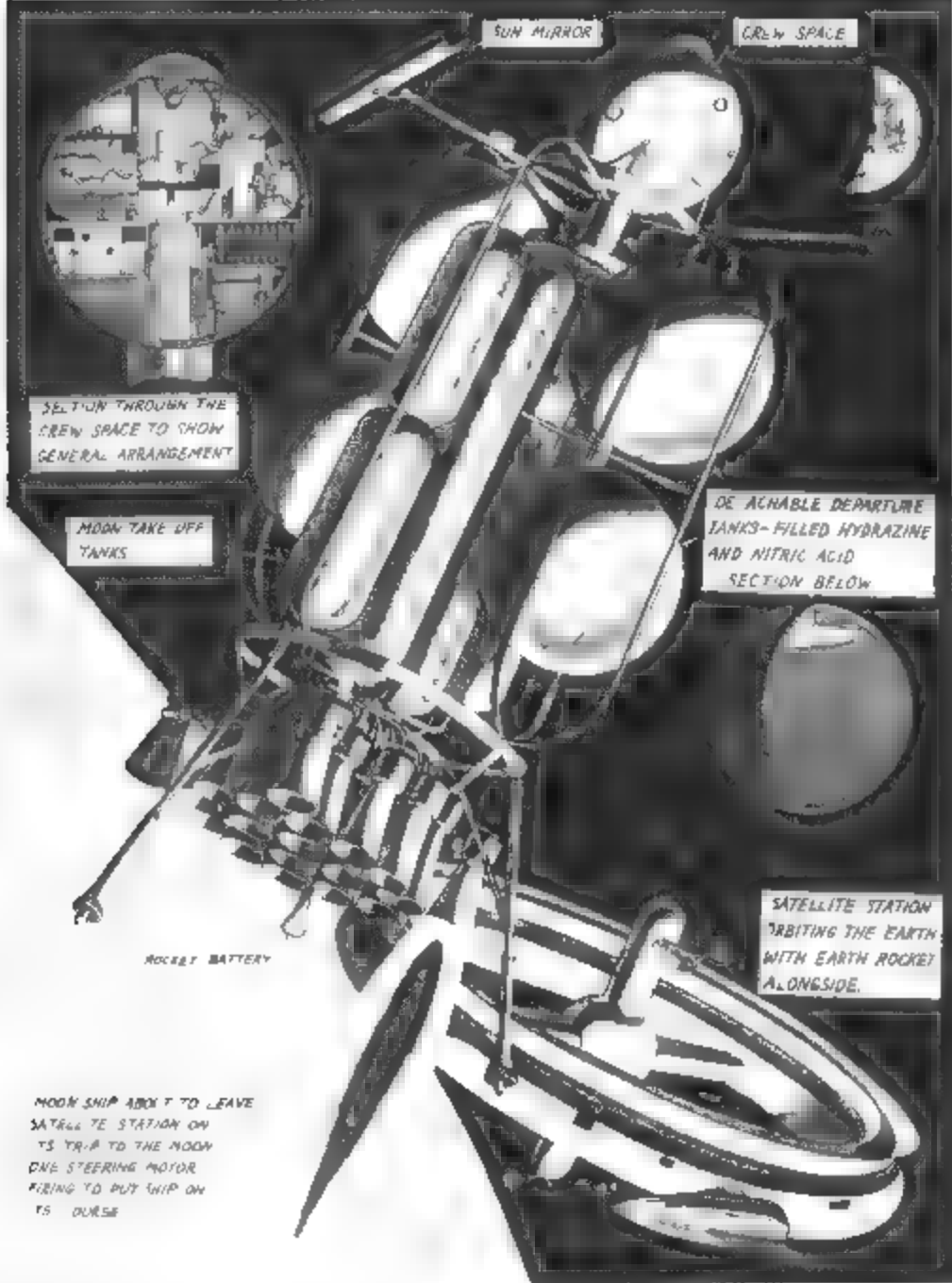
Rocket tried hard to give its young readers a taste of adventure and a sense of awe. To keep the costs down, the picture paper bought in older American material and either ran them with a border to compensate for the size of the US originals or cut the pages and resized them.

One such strip was 'Escape from Earth', an unidentified nine-panel half-pager with obvious newspaper roots. It told of a journey into space with as much science fact as could be reasonably dropped into a kids' strip without turning it into a scientific paper. Radiation, space madness and the effects of cosmic rays were discussed and the dramatic results illustrated - in a fifty piece of space pulp. And we are only on page three!

Another imported space hero was 'John Storm', written and illustrated by prolific Dutch artist and writer Henk Sprenger. This was another newspaper strip, this time presented at a level of detail unusual in strip work for the period. The British 'John Storm' was known throughout much of Europe as 'Pilot Storm', itself a recently reimagined version of Sprenger's popular aviation war comic *Arend Stork*. This is another hidden



(Above): John Storm artwork pulled off the trick of combining a retro Flash Gordon style with hints of the underground comics still a decade in the future.



Rocket had some of the best visions of space travel ever to grace a comics page (left).

gem of comic strip history that richly deserves an English language printing. The colour centre-spread was reserved for Mac Raboy's version of 'Flash Gordon' (top half) and Frank Robbins' strangely non-SF Johnny Hazard. The imaginative use of split page layout gave these strips a graphic dynamism that lifted the action right off the page. It was probably the first time British readers had seen Flash Gordon in colour. Another old favourite from the comics was William Ritt and Clarence Gray's 'Brick Bradford'. Like Gordon, kids would have recently cheered Bradford on in a serial adventure at the Saturday matinee and here he was in colour. Using all the tropes of space opera, Brick took readers on exotic adventures to strange jungle worlds, hazardous quests aboard flying sky-ships and even spinning backwards and forwards through time.

The back cover serial, Professor Jack Ransom discovers The Seabed Citadel, was drawn and written by Ley Kenyon, an aqua-ling expert and a member of Jacques Cousteau's underwater

team. Although the science may have been impeccable, the fact that it was drawn in mainly long-shots meant that it remained deeply impersonal. Just like the cold, dark world of the deep.

Adding Texture
As well as the well-chosen adventure strips, *Rocket* also had a reasonable range of text stories. Again, in an effort to keep costs down, some of the stories were little more than extracts used to fill space and sell books. Adventure with an Octopus' was one such

(Below). Artist Eric Parker often failed to nail the SF in William Temple's *St. Rockets* 'the science college of tomorrow'





(Above): Clarence Gray's Brick Bradford proves that space could be a gay place

story in which an extract from Sir Arthur Grimble's *A Pattern of Islands* was given the proto-tabloid treatment by taking a rather run-of-the-mill encounter with a octopus and presenting it as a battle to the death with a deep sea creature.

Perhaps the best text story was Conrad Frost's 'The Jungle Space' a pulp adventure set on Mars. It had all the elements we have come to expect from juvenile SF fiction but told with breathless energy and an unusual attention to character detail. It also benefited from some great artwork by Winstade.

The other major text adventure was William Temple's 'St. Rockets'. Temple was well known for his Martin

(Below): *Escape from Earth's* plot may have been childish – but its vocabulary and attempt to keep the science right raised it up a notch or two.



Magnus series of SF juveniles and his professional sm and knowledge of space sh nes through in every paragraph Temple was a member of the British Interplanetary Society and was a one-time flatmate of Arthur C. Clarke. Such a background ensured that space fact must have run like a Blue Streak through his veins.

Cut-aways

For this writer the highlight of each issue is the space-related cutaway on

the inside back cover. Rendered with technical precision by J. Yunge-Bateman of the Royal Navy they provide a wonderful and inspiring insight to the vision of space travel then held by some of the foremost thinkers in the British Space Race.

The whole comic is evocative of a time when the fantastic promise of space appeared to be just a few bits of metal, a big engine and an heroic ch n away.

Rockets Away

Editor Sir Douglas Bader wrote to readers from his observatory 'in an orbiting satellite speaking enthusiastically about the promise of space. Interestingly for the period very little Cold War paranoia appears in the strips beyond the occasional presence of a foreigner from some un-named eastern country.

The science and space-fact may have been a little too heavy for its core market, however, as *Rocket* ceased publication after just 32 issues. Its short run has made it highly collectable and although issues can be picked up for around £4 to £5 each, time is running out if you want to get on board for *Rocket's* new-found appreciation. This title is definitely on the up!

Sir Douglas Bader believed that "the new Elizabethan Age has found horizons wider than the first Elizabethans envisaged. The depths below our sea and the space round our planet form the immediate horizons which man is striving to cross".

It was his mission to bring the awe and excitement of space to the baby boomers for whom space exploration would become mundane in the matter of a few decades.

"You are joining what looks like becoming the largest Space Club in the world," he excitedly promised.

For some of us, that promise is still very much alive. ●

French artist and comic fan Marc Andre was in touch with Cr key within a week of it's first appearance. After a couple of exchanges I suggested that he might like to put finger to keyboard and provide Cr key's readers with the inside story on how someone living in France became such a big fan of British comics

The French Connection

by Marc-Andre

I was born in 1960 and my parents were not fond of comics. Just imagine their faces when I told them, at 16, that I wanted to be either a burglar (really) or a cartoonist (I can say now that burglar - sometimes pays more)

Well, I ended up as a graphic artist as well as doing comics and illustrations.

I had a subscription in 1967 to *Le Journal de Mickey* - which happened to publish 'Archibald Razmott' ('Eagle-Eye Junior Spy') and 'Matt Le shériff' ('Gunsmoke') in the beginning of the 70s (although 'Flash Gordon' by Dan Barry was my favourite)

But that was not my first exposure to British comics. My brother had a subscription to *Junior*, which was a

cheaper reprint of the weekly *Tintin*, but, as with *Spirou* or *Vaillant le Journal de Pif*, they were not fond of translations of foreign strips at the time. Even if they had some, I couldn't have known. Comics (la bande dessinée) was badly considered, it was rubbish for many people.

The only other comic weeklies we could get were those sold by the travelling grocery van (every Thursday). He only had *Tintin* and the new format of *Vaillant* and *Pif Gadget* which my grandmother bought for a few months before reading in the *Catholic Press* that it was (oh oh) communist or ented.

At the church they sold *Record* (many articles, few but good comics) and it replaced my Mickey subscription.

Pilote had a ready publisher some Frank Belamy pages and the adventures of Jeff Arnold but it was a grown-up magazine and stayed unknown to me for some years.

We could only get other monthly and quarterly comics when on holiday, and discovering so many revues, magazines, periodicals that we didn't imagine they existed. We could buy some *Pepito* (by Italian Luciano Bottaro), the new *Tarzan* monthly (with the debuts of the Manning tenure) and some others. The only thing forbidden were the petit formats (pocket sized comics) of which there were hundreds.

The first British comic story I remember reading when younger (1967-68) was 'Le Cub des Trois' in the quarterly *Pim Pam Poom* (Lug Publisher) who, I discovered years later, was 'Our gang' by Dennis Malet.

There they were! Kids doing absolutely mad things, something never seen in other comics! And some of the adults in the comic were nuts, as well, and I loved reading the pages, full of this kind of freedom. In this same comic magazine was 'Tracassin, mon journal au jour le jour' ('Buster') which had, later, a spin-off: 'Les rêves de Tracassin' (Tracassin's dreams - Buster's Dream World) in other mags from the same publisher.

Fiesta, Albums Comiques de Kiwi - this last one had other British strips, such as 'Pop' and 'Les Affreux' with nasty humorous kids.

There were many other publishers that translated British comics, *Rin Tin Tin* (Sagédition) had 'Blackbow', 'Vengeance



Tra 'Jeff Arnold' .. Les Pieds Nickelés Magazine and Bibi Fricotin Magazine (Société Parisienne d'Éditions) had Tass O'meil ('Lazy Sprockett' from Buster), 'P'tite Tête' ('Big head' from Smash) and so on Bugs Bunny ran 'L'œil de Zoïter' ('Kelly's eye')

In 1973, as I was a college boarder, my family moved from a 2000+ souls little town to a 417 (yes) one. A most every comic I had was either lost, given away or burnt

The pocket sized comics began to come home in the seventies, and I could read Barnabé in Vick ('Wacker' from Smash), 'Arch ba d Razmott' under another name, translated in a new publication, Ooooh! (Éditions Aventures et Voyages) which didn't last more than five issues and many many others as for the publishers of the pocket sized comics, it was cheaper to buy in London or Dundee or Barcelona Milano Buenos Aires than to have only French writers and artists. Many of those small publications only reprinted British comics, such as Battler Britton, Rangers or Navy that translated the Fleetway war titles Princesse or such other that had every girl strip. There was 'Archie the Robot', 'Birdman', 'Jet Logan'

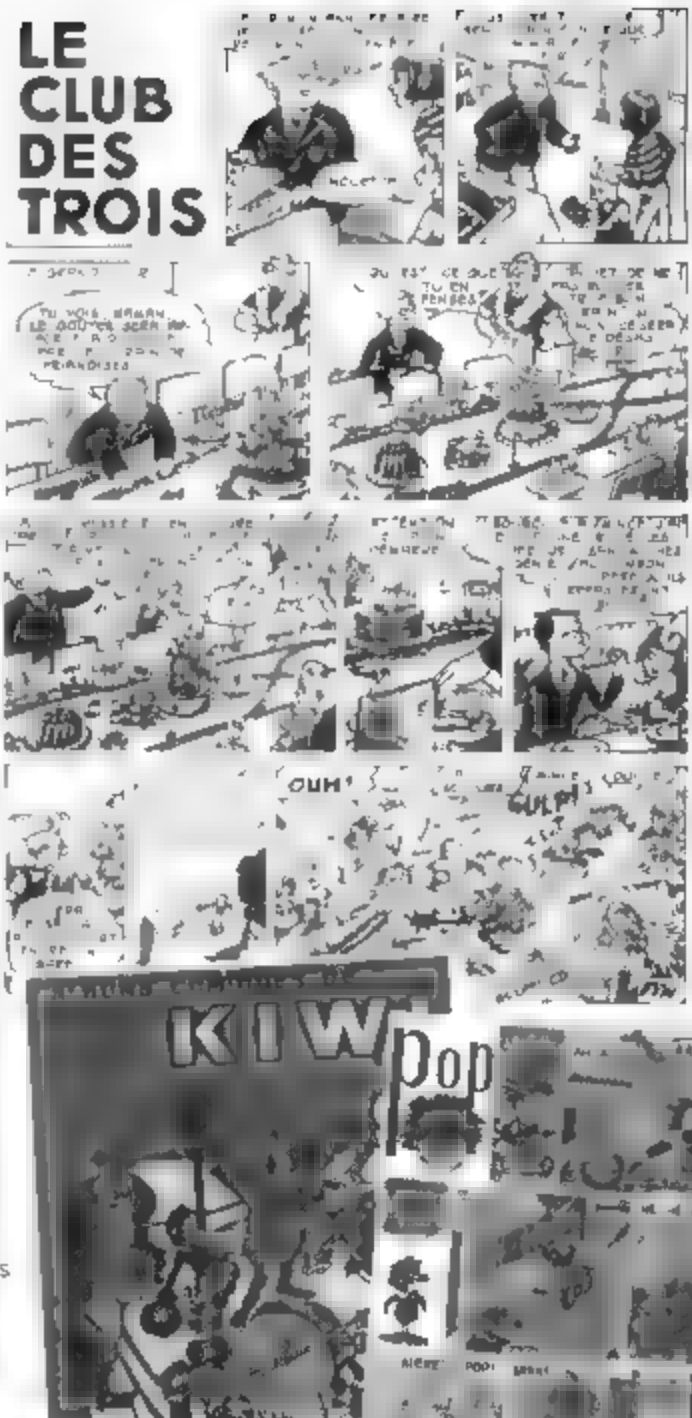
But the money was not there and I discovered some of the titles only when on holiday or much later when I began to earn my own money but it was a bit late and the end of most of the publishing houses had begun. I could find some 'Captain Condor', 'Billy the Kid', 'Buffalo Bill', 'Billy Brave', 'Matt Mariott', 'Knights of the Road'

Later, in the '80s, Aventures et Voyages translated other IPC series from Battle, Action, Tornado and 2000 AD: Charley's war, Death Race, Judge Dredd, Angry Planet, etc ... just before folding their business

In the end of the '80s, I began writing articles about comics in 'Hop' and I could see in print my features about Frank Beilamy, Peter O'Donnell and others

For the daily strips, still in the '70s, I could read for a short time 'Agence Une' (The Seekers) in Centre-Presse the regional newspaper my parents subscribed to, but I think that James Bond, Modesty Basse, and later Amanda were published in other national newspapers as FRANCE SOIR

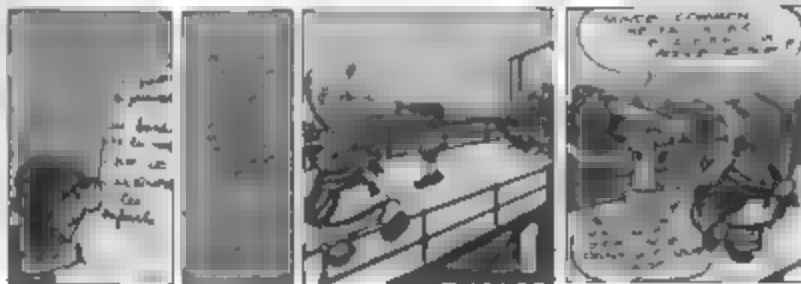
Weil, that's all for memories ●



(Right) Buster's Diary-with a soupçon of French.



(Top right) 'Our Gang' by Dennis Mallet.



A THIEF AND HIS JAILER SET OUT ON A SPECIAL MISSION IN A GREAT NEW WAR STORY — STARTING TODAY!

THE VICTOR

MONDAY

STAND FIGHT!



On 25 February 1961, a new comic was launched by the venerable Scots company D.C. Thomson. It was *The Victor*, a mix of action, adventure and war stories aimed firmly at the ever-profitable 11 to 14-year-old boys market. The comic followed the model proven by the new *Hotspur* of mainly pictorial stories with a text story to keep the cost of employing yet another artist down, but even that economy was to pass with the quiet dropping of the last text story in 1971 (issue 540).

To help encourage parting with pocket money, the first issue came free with a squirt gun. And issue two had a set of sporting cards. But more importantly to this humble reader, this was the first time that the venerable True Story appeared on the front cover of the Victor. That story was "The One Man Army" which told the story of how Lance Corporal John Harman won the VC for his actions on 9 April 1944.

True Story was a feature that had appeared in various

DC Thomson titles, but for the first time it became a strong part of a comic's identity. For a lot of us, the real Victor died when the True Stories of Men At War was quietly dropped in December 1987 in favour of "The Goals of Jimmy Grant" (issue 1400) in order to boost falling sales.

Old Friends

The most notable character to grace issue one was Braddock V.C., a character that had a successful transfer from *Rover* and was beautifully transformed from text to illustration by Keith Shone. Other characters that had successful transfers into the Victor were notably Morgyn The Mighty (from the *Angels in the Rain*) drawn by Ted Keam and his own loveable Alf Tupper who was the iconic character most associated with the Victor (art by Pete Sutherland). There were other characters from related comics such as 'Cap'n Hand And His Mutinous Band', 'Figaro', 'The Hays And The Bails', 'Union Jack Jackson' but none were as associated with the Victor as Braddock, Morgyn and Tupper.

Alf Tupper is remembered with such fondness that thanks to Mike Shawfield's dedication, Alf has his own website www.toughofthetrack.net.

New Friends

Original characters also made their mark, so the Victor warranted a complete excuse for D.C. Thomson to exhume their back catalogue and repackage them for the '60s. The most notable of these were Wee Bandy, a cattie-man who was a star striker for his local team in the 1960s.

Another was Joe Bones, an orrible soldier happiest when sat in Cookie's kitchen, but an absolute genius at mountaineering in his bare feet. Thanks to the efforts of Lord Plimpton, he got plenty of chances to use this skill in various parts of the world during World War 2. And we mustn't forget Cadman, The Fighting Coward, from the First World

War, who was a genius in getting his actions to be misinterpreted as heroic, despite being a greedy, manipulative, blustering coward, but his batman, Corporal Tom Smith knew the score. And although one of the best comedy characters, the Hammer Man blacksmith Chell Puddock who was set in ye olde Engleland and his good deeds would almost always backfire on him leaving him and Sir Jinks penniless. As the years passed they each left their mark on Victor.

There was an update to the logo in August 1973 and then, only five years later Victor was to save its first sister comic casualty. "Great News Inside!" meant that the revived Wizard had fallen below the mark of profitability and was swallowed up in July '78 with the publication of issue 906.

Few Wizard characters survived this merger and then only for a short period, but at least it gave the Victor editor a few more choices when he needed to fill a gap in the comic.

Last man standing

The Victor's greatest victory!

By Colin Noble

There were many more characters that appeared in Victor but that would probably take a 2-10 page book to list and list them all so as a teaser I will list just a few of the stories and characters and then see how many more you can remember.

The image shows the front cover of a book titled 'THE VICTOR BOOK FOR BOYS 1972'. The title is prominently displayed at the top in a large, bold, blocky font. Below the title, there is a stylized, high-contrast illustration of a ship, possibly a submarine or a battleship, depicted in a dynamic, almost abstract manner. The ship is angled upwards towards the right. The background of the cover is a light, textured grey. The overall design is simple and graphic, typical of mid-20th-century children's book covers.

Victor itself was not immune to changes as the stores tried to be more edgy as the 1980s wore on. It wasn't enough to stop sales from continuing to fall. A last-ditch effort was made in April '91 to update *Victor* into a glossy format (issue 1573, with more features on sport and adventure stores). While the new look *Victor* seemed to rally, it was only masking more serious symptoms and on 21 November '92 we saw the weekly *Victor* make its final appearance.

Sp n-off materia was the perennial Christmas favourite annual which lasted a respectable 31 years from 1964 to 1994 and the Summer Specials putting in a respectable 26 years from 1967 to 1992 and an unusual Adventure Special in 1987.

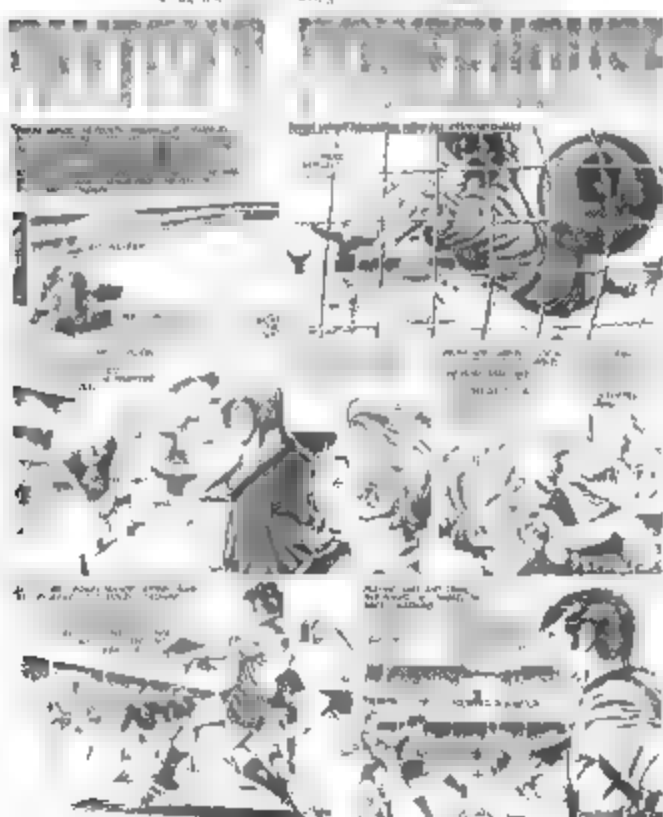
Brouillette and his Mosquito are running smack into a squadron of German fighters and the only people who can save them are Kenney and Finner who are sent to fly



Phew! What a Scorcher!!

...ht on **BOBBY MOORE** - Inside! *

By Tom Sweetman



A popular mainstay of boys' comics has always been the weekly football strip. When assembling together the ingredients of any new comic the adventures of an indomitable striker and his wayward team would be paramount in the editor's mind as the obvious concession to sporting popularity. Sure there were wrangling wrestlers and robust runners but a football story soon became the byword for recreating heroism through sporting prowess.

In 1970 IPC came up with what seemed to be the riskiest of ventures - a new comic devoted entirely to football. *Scorchers* was born out of the excitement generated in the run up to the 1970 World Cup in Mexico. England were champions and therefore one of the favourites to secure the Jules Rimet trophy. Okay, the tournament would take place at a titude but England had reached dizzy heights before. The summer came, the heat increased and we knew we were in for a 'Scorchers' Football on the domestic scene was thriving with a particularly atypical Manchester City side dominating the game and God was in his heaven and all was well with the world.

Close to the action story telling made *Scorchers* a hit right from the kick off.

Things were about to get even hotter though as probably the finest team to grace this planet were about to change everything. What could be accomplished on the comic page with a well-drawn free kick was about to become reality on the fields of Guadalajara. I know you grabbed this magazine due to your love of comics but any fan of any art would have fallen in love with the boys from Brazil.

Back of the net

For comics it had never been enough to simply recreate the adventures of a football team in serial form. A week by week telling of battles in the Lancashire mud culminating in 1-0 defeats to Accrington Stanley would hardly have fired imaginations already warped by 'Janus Stark', 'The Iron Eaters' and 'The Steel Claw'.

what was needed was novelty and invention. At the very least there had to be something extraordinary about the team or their main player. Ideally the situations they found themselves in would then become

increasingly more bizarre and convoluted.

To fill a whole *Scorcher* along these lines every week required the writers and artists to conjure up some of the most incredible scenarios that have ever graced British comics. There were some ordinary strips about players who were simply outstanding footballers but as the weeks went on their adventures became more a weekly tribute to *The Great Escape* than to footballing prowess.

Throw in

Bobby Booth was the goal-scoring genius behind the rise of Liverpool City. Can it really be true that only when writing this article did the name Liverpool leap out as a mixture of the two Merseyside giants?

Ah – the innocence of youth!

During his career however, he seemed to be constantly on the verge of failure as his side trailed during important games against resister teams as the Liverpool striker awaited news from the sidelines that would resuscitate his deflated game. Ever with his psychological demons, our 'Bobby of the Blues' was clean cut and normal compared to the rest of the *Scorcher* gang.

Some wag in the crowd would shout the great intelligence that Bobby's Uncle's chickens had been cured of the flu epidemic that was sweeping the nation. Bobby would respond with a net-busting volley to the cheers of the same crowd that had turned on him at the dramatic cliffhanger just a week before.

In one particularly tormented moment Bobby lost all concentration after ripping up a beggaring letter. His worries that the writer may have been an irrevocable



The psychological element is the key to telling a good football story.

trouble meant that vital passes went astray as opposition forwards sailed past with amazed looks. The solution lay with Bobby's dad who drove him out to the luxury mansion owned by the beggaring letter badman. With Bobby's torturous soul lifted, he went on to lift every trophy that he could possibly accumulate as his demons were said to rest – at least until next time!

On me 'ead

Having impossible situations and perilous adventures was only the half of it. Better still was to have a set up that created the tone of what was to come. Could Redstone Rovers have possibly guessed when they went on a pre-season tour of Australia that they were to meet up with their new star striker, 'The Kangaroo Kid'?

It was a they could do to get him to exchange his aborig na origins and join cloth for their famous red strip. They were paid back n leaps and bounds as the Kangaroo Kid not only vaulted tall defenders with a sing e jump but at t mes dalled with the stratosphere as he literally took to flight.

Losing an important game w th only seconds left? Lob n a h gh one for the Kid and rip up the physics text books. T e the Kangaroo K d down? Impossible!

Whatever the problems presented though, the footballing stars met them w th dign ty, passion and honesty. They never wou d have dreamed of sink ng to the unimaginable depths of some of their South American opponents. Or would they?

What if the team were actual y footballing feions? Enter 'Lags Eleven'. Willie Smith had been transferred from Bankhurst Prison to Crunchvie Jail where he organised the inmates into the finest football team in captivity.

The original scheme had been to enter the F.A. Cup and having battled through the pre-liminary rounds secure an away match at a ground that would afford an easy escape. The only problem was that once the big day came the lads wanted to actually win the game! So when the chance to return to their past lives presented

tsel f they decided to play the rest of the match.

Bleeding heart liberals take note, there was more done for pena reform on the play ng fields of Crunchvie than through any parliamentary lobby ng.

It must have worked as there were no sieges, drug deals or ce hang ngs to report as the team beat (sometimes literally) all opposition. If things seemed to be going wrong then Willie soon put it right.

Look ng l ke los ng an important cup tie? Kidnap the ref at half-t me and replace him with a suitab y mustachioed look-a-ke. Star striker released from jail the week before an important encounter? Break out of jail, frame the poor bugger for something he d dn't do and the wheels of justice will move that qu ckly that he'l be back nside and in the team by Saturday.

Not for nothing was Willie known by the a as 'Brilliant Genius' by his awestruck team-mates. He did bear a ttle too much of a resemblance to six es madcap singer Freddie Garretty from Freddie and the Dreamers for some readers' l k ng but it didn't seem to prevent his schemes from being fulfilled.

'Lags Eleven' resorted to some dastardly means in the r games but th s was only the t p of the sporting enhancements iceberg.

A successful football story must always be about football but never just about football.

IT'S A RIOT WHEN PRISON TEAMS PLAY SOCCER!



It's a goal!

Before the days when the most important th ng about football was the make of boots that you wore Billy Dane was sometimes mocked for the brown dubbing clodhoppers he donned before each and every game.

Team-mates would soon get over the fact that Billy seemed to have found his clobber on a local t p though as he ran rings round the tormented opposition and rained n shots l ke hunter m ssiles from all areas of the park.

Billy seemed to always be in the right place at the right time with a sense of timing and a prowess that was simply magical. The problem was that it truly was magical. The power, you see, was in the boots!

Bily's Boots' raised the subtle question of whether it was ethical to enhance skills through artificial means long before Maradona ooked down the sharp end of a needle and Rio decided to sk p training early. Billy had found an ancient pair of football boots that belonged to Dead Shot Keen. The particular method of enchantment by which Dead Shot's sk ls were transferred was never properly explained and merely put down as being 'by some strange means'. Whatever the juju though, it worked. Cue a hundred stories about m ssing, stolen or irreparab y destroyed boots.

There's that wag in the crowd again, "B y! B y! Yer Boots have arrived. I've managed to stitch them back together." Three nil down and ten minutes to go - watch out though,

the boots are back in town and these boots were made for hat-tricks!

Get new specs, ref!

If Billy Dane raised the question of whether it was okay to use artificial means to achieve success, then Power Manor FC caused an all night sitting in what was truly the most exciting football strip of a time ruthless football manager Vince Paxton had formed his own club, Power Manor.

With the assistance of Professor Zarron and his fantastic dials and vials, Paxton was able to transform young players into his Power Men. Imagine Brian Clough being rejected by football – let's say being refused the England job when he was obviously the best manager in the country. Then take that a stage further – a team of no-hopers transformed into European champions rising meteorically with no pundit having any other explanation than 'the cult of personality'. Hey! Hang on Nottingham Forest, anybody? Hmmmm.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, Power Manor was to be infiltrated by Mick Darby, a soccer spy employed by Paxton's enemies. His mission was to find out what those flashing lights were in the Power Manor dressing rooms!

To find out what was going on though, meant Darby had to get into the team and he had to win his place by fair means as well avoiding all the mind and body enhancing wonderments that Zarron could muster.

Power Manor was a groundbreaking strip. At a time when a pre-match warm up consisted of steak and chips followed by a couple of pints and a pie, Paxton was talking pasta. The machines may have bent the FIFA rule book slightly but no more so than some of the robot opponents, witch doctors and centre-forwards from Outer Space found elsewhere in the fascinating sub-genre of fantastic football.

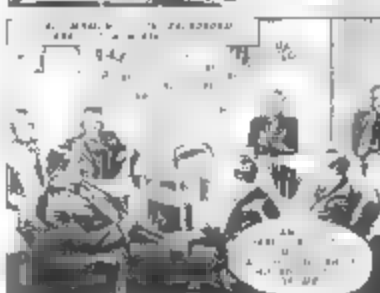
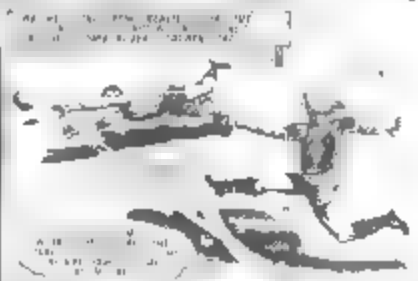
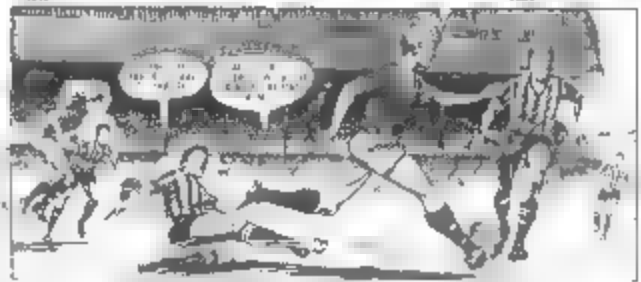
Glance over to the West side of London now at the Jose revolution and maybe Power Manor doesn't seem a that far fetched. Just like their modern Chelsea counterparts though, the Power Men had their weakness and it was the same one. They couldn't play in the rain! In the end Paxton loved football and so did Darby. Winning was more important than competing and if winning could be done by fair means then all the better.

Paxton's rivals even tried to turn his own technology against him. During an important game in France a giant wind machine was cunningly (and seemingly invisibly) placed on the stadium roof, transforming the whole game into an oversized version of blow football.

Paxton and Zarron could only look on helplessly as one



KANGAROO KID



Scorcher's mix of football and fantasy elements provided readers with a great variety of stories.

of their own wacky windmill twisted the path of the ball inevitably toward the own goal. Frankenstein had come home and this time he had his boots on.

Final whistle

The glory years for the nation's first football comic (as with Manchester City) were short-lived. Through amalgamation with Score'n'Roar the formula became more and more diluted until finally the weekly went the way of Accrington. For a while though the beautiful game really was gorgeous. Even Score'n'Roar leapt onto the impossible dream.

Yes, for a while though Scorcher had it a

Impossible free kicks

Shots that went in from the halfway line

Incredible comebacks

Mystical training regimes

The most fitting tribute that can be paid to this exceptional comic though, is that thirty years on it has all come true! ●

So much
to answer
for...

The Kidnapped Kidds

The adventures of a girl and a boy kidnapped by desperate gangsters.

By Tom Elliott



In our launch issue Brian M Clarke extolled the virtues of Wham! as 'the funniest comic in the World + Ever'. I would hesitate to

disagree with that but if it came to championing a comic as the most under-rated, I'd say it was time to take a rather large, compelling glass to a little celebrated British gem from the mid '60s - Sparky!

What cultural horror would we now view the title character with in our diverse society's a rather open-minded that makes the character's galling appear politically correct. Sparky himself was the signature character and one who would now have the comic pulled from the stands within minutes of publication. The other comic gurus of 'Hungry Men' would surely now be thrown upon by the law vegetable and fruits a day, heavy duty, and the annual Pantomime Don that would 'Playmate Kate' peering through any opening to see what went on behind the locked doors of Sparkytown would make delighted socio-economic cultural psycho-babble fodder for a future issue of Gilbert & Sullivan from these

light-hearted celebrations of colonialism, bulimia and gaydarism. Sparky also had its darker side - a very dark side indeed.

Bogey Men

Social historians will have a field day with the continuing story of 'The Kidnapped Kidds'. A mere year after two of the defining printed events of the 1960s - the Great Train Robbery and the Moors Murders - Jack and his sister Joan were kidnapped by bank robbers because they could identify the gang of crooks to the police. Held in a remote cave by Gus and Betty, the strip struck a resonant tone with children for whom the Bogeyman was no longer an unwashed spectre. In 1965 we had our real monsters and their names were Ian and Myra. Dark night Manchester was over the same after three innocent and dark images of Brady and his companion

stared out from newspapers. Then to find the horror confounded in a weekly title was, as the Moors Murders biography of the time by Emily Williams suggests, 'Beyond Belief'.

Again transfer all of those sensibilities to modern England and imagine the outrage at a comic strip inspired by the adventures of Ian Huntley and you really do wonder how this one slipped through the net. Uniting the newspaper headlines occasioned by Great Train-robber Ronald Biggs and Moors Murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, the innocent-sounding *Sparky!* cooked up one of the most truly terrifying tales ever told in British



No escape

The adventure continued each week with the increasingly frantic efforts of the Kidd kids to escape their captors. Gus and Betty were certainly not kindly captors as the children were subjected to physical and emotional abuse.

This was the stuff that nightmares were made of. As would be expected from comics of that period, the poor Kidds were not snatched from an urban sprawl but from a delightfully rural backwater. It was as if evil has stalked into Playhour comic and took 'Jack and Jill' as its incongruous captives. One minute David and Susan were playing Doctors and Nurses (Dr David and Nurse Susan) and the next they were in the twilight zone without any moral compass and no signposts back home. Some of the best comics are about rites of passage and the end of childhood. For the Kidds the change was dreadful and

Instant. Monday morning: Railway Cottage, one mile from the village of Hutton. Monday afternoon: bundled into a van and off to the robbers' hideout.

Helpless

The efforts of a society to come to terms with the evil unleashed on the Saddleworth moors near Manchester were reflected in the tone of the feature. The police, in short, the police & all seemed helpless in their efforts to free the kids from their captivity. The public juxtaposition of the parts the children had taken into and the idyllic holiday landscape of sun and sky that surrounded the cave echoed the thrill-and-dare excitement of an Eric Sykes adventure. When read against the background of daily warnings from parents, teachers and police of Stranger Danger, bad advice, the threat was far darker and more threatening than the smugglers and crafty spies that peopled the hidden caves to puzzle and perplex the Famous Five. The 'Kidnapped Kidds' marked a waystation on the path that reflected the social changes about to be unleashed in the late '60s. Jack and Jean would have been at home in any strip prior to that date and the real horror of the situation was that the ever-cruel harshness of the outside



world was seeping into the comic in a way that had not gone (as acknowledged by the recent world war. The future was calling.

Without wishing to adopt rose tinted spectacles, the mid-60s genuinely was a simpler time for children. Young people were about to become targets for a market that wanted their potential spending power. The following two years were, arguably, the greatest cultural shift that has happened in British society as the invisible machine of the US transformed from Sergeant Pepper's spread-out hand.

Strange

The kids were, in retrospect, probably asking for it. They possessed the ability to remember air raid sirens, gaspion faces, still not done, remember events and



Um letters!

For future issues of Crikey! let us know what you think about our magazine, British comics, your reactions to features or simply make us laugh. Our address is: Crikey! 4 Hallsborough Drive, Unsworth, Bury BL9 8LE
Our electricity communication conduit in the electronic world is : www.Crikeyuk.co.uk

Um Crikey!

As a woman who loves a man who loves comics I wasn't initially sure that Crikey! was the best thing ever to enter my life.

We did talk about comics. Spent an afternoon in Sheffield looking at comics. Who would have thought comic marts could be so interesting. Or indeed so hard to find on the weekend of the snooker world cup thingy - bigger and better placed posters please, Sheffield Hellum!

There was an affectionate but intense pause in conversation when he revealed that some of the seriously erotic ones had a place in his collection. Cue much sucking in of tummy - which is hard when you are trying not to wear an expression reminiscent of nothing more than the fact that if you sucked a woman it would be the woman that winced - and off to Whitley for even more goth clothing; not that I am insecure or anything.

The discussion about if he moved in with me would I have to convert the attic because he needs to store his comic collection somewhere as he had a collection of about 10,000 and they needed a room of their own (take note if you find all the dodgy ones on the top of the collection, the room will be locked forever and the key accidentally dropped down the nearest manhole!)

And now we had a comic about comics...cue huge sighs and much gnashing of teeth.

But I paid for a subscription because I thought it would make him happy (cue soft music and lots of ahhhhhs which does I have quite the same ring when it comes from a group of comic loving (mostly) men chuntering over Spider-man, X-Men (so it was a comic before it was a film!) us I live and breathe!) and for the solid ones, Twinkles but then I found the Misty article! Cue happy music, goth ambience, thoughts of girl power and memories of being I and the desolation of finding out my mum forgot to get edition 11. Even then I thought the they did I have it when I went to the newsagent! had a dodgy ring to it. And I never did find out what happened in the two strips that were ending in that edition. What did happen to the girl whose dad was in a debtors' prison who cut out silhouettes to make money and the one who was transported to Australia and now find out you can get it on DVD.

Looks like we are going to need another box in that there attic conversion!

Keep up the good work, boys I think you have a convert

Dr Stirling-Chew aged 40 and 3/4

This Crikey! thing could end up costing you a fortune. Dr. First there's the subscription. Then there's the decision you must have made by now to start collecting Misty. What's next? Professional archival storage systems? Temperature controlled library? And that's before you even begin to think about collecting the original artwork. Did you know you could do that, Dr? How where has that girl gone?

Um Crikey!

Picked up a copy of your fine mag in the Bristol branch of Travelling Man today. Crikey! indeed! I feel a mag dedicated to British comics has been well overdue and considered pulling one together a few years back, but I don't have the knowledge or the comic collection. So it was a pretty daft idea really. Glad someone with the

knowledge and enthusiasm is doing the subject justice

For a first issue it's an outstanding effort! It's a great-looking mag- the production values are great, the reproductions and layouts are crisp, clean and uncluttered. The Frank Bellamy piece in particular looks fab and saved the Dr Droll pages

A few suggestions/observations for you to do with you what you want. Much as I love the nostalgia pieces, as a child of the 70s they were all a bit warm and fuzzy for me. Lacking a bit of grit and edge. Maybe that reflects that I grew up reading Action, Battle and 2000AD

The pieces seemed a bit too lightweight for me- the Misty article for example. Hopefully moving forward you can encourage your contributors to really get stuck into the detail.

In terms of the fab illustrations used I would have loved to have known which issues they came from and who the artists were

More checklists if you're going for the collector's type

market. Stuff I'd love to see- Monster Fun, Chiller Pocket Library, Near Myths and One Eyed Jack. Tomorrow I'll check my own pubs in the post to you- Pop! Mania- the pulp fiction equivalent of Crikey!, dedicated to British paperbacks of the 60s and 70s. Only poorly bound copies left I'm afraid, so it may well fall apart in your hands!

Hope you enjoy.

Really looking forward to the next issue of Crikey!, I think you have a real success on your hands.

All the best
justin@justin-culprint.free-online.co.uk

Thanks for the kind words. You're not the only one to comment on our stuffiness. When setting up Crikey! we wanted to make it as accessible as we could to a wider public. The idea was that no matter what your level of knowledge, Crikey! would have something for you. That's why for the first issue we stayed away from too much trainpotter-ism. Now that we have several new writers



A
EFTWAY
ANNUAL



AXES, ARMS, KUN AND FANTASY COMICS

NEAR MYTHS



joining the team, look out for more in-depth articles and more references
But we're going to keep the fun stuff, too!

Um Crikey!
What a mess!

Bits of pages, bits of frames, some on a slant, some obscured by others, speech bubbles cut in half, extracts reduced the size of illegibility.
The same dreadful excess of graphic design is creeping into the annual DC Thomson reprints. Traditional strips are being computer coloured in satine, pastel shades; with individual frames 'tipped' from their parent pages, enlarged and superimposed so as to obliterate part of the story

was taught that the golden rule of graphic design is less is more. Please give us complete frames/pages we can actually see to draw over in future issues
Ray Aspdon
Droitwich

Crikey! received lots of positive comments about its design and production values. But it has also received a few like yours, Ray. Sometimes it's difficult to decide between an enlarged section that is clearly legible and using a full-page that will be reduced to about a third. The close up shows detail, the full-page shows layout and story-telling.

We also had this idea of just glimpsing sections of comics to raise curiosity about the artist / character / comic. Looking back, I can see how it might frustrate more people than it inspires. Hopefully, this issue is more to your (and other peoples') taste. Stick around, we have even more changes planned for Issue three

Um Crikey!

Just subscribed to *Crikey!* by PayPal. Congrats on issue. Great choice of illustration and a nice mix of nostalgia and scholarship in the articles. But...Oh for some colour! The Frank Bellamy pages particularly scream for it, and a reminder of Frankenstein's sickly pallor would be a tonic. Also, a few more captions would help identify who, what, when and where although no colours or appropriate words (especially in this PC age) are needed to point out the dubious delights to be found within the pages of *Misty* as displayed in page 33.
Thanks for a great first issue. I look forward to many more.
Dave via internet

Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to get more colour into *Crikey!* The hope is that by issue three or four our print run will be large enough to allow us to absorb the cost of at least a colour section. We're also looking at selling more ads and as that money comes into the pot we should be able to use that to up the quality

Um Crikey!

Great 1st issue!
Brought back many happy memories. Would love to see an article about Joe Bones. The Human Fly from Victor comic. Also in future issues actual complete stories from a different type of comic would

be a fantastic addition
All in all keep up the good work and looking forward to many more issues
Tom Clarkson
Edinburgh

I guess you have already spotted the Victor piece in this issue - and there is another Victor article lined up for a future issue. Joe Bones lasted an incredible 11 years (1975-1986) - not bad for a lad who was just good at climbing.

Crikey! is the word!
I expected a magazine that styled itself The Great British Comics Magazine to be all about British comics

The parts that were about British comics were great. The Bellamy article read well and looked terrific. The *Wham!* piece was mostly good - what it needed was more *Wham!* pictures. And features like *Nutty Nations* is definitely the way to go - but with more info about the artists and writers and which comics the strips appeared in.
What I hated was stuff like *My Comic Saturday Morning*. Who cares what it was like back then! And *Devil in the Dark* was too bad for words. Terrible writing about nothing.

I really want *Crikey!* to work and it will if you stick to the comics and the people who made them. Please, no more rubbish about staying up late in an old papershop. And if you have to get a proper writer.
Carl Booth, Norwich

When we set up *Crikey!* I had a couple of jobs to do. Firstly, it had to amuse Glenn, Tom and myself and be something we would like to read and be proud of. Next, we wanted to use *Crikey!* to remind as many people as possible about our forgotten industry. All three of us have worked professionally in comics and we were proud of what our industry was like. We wanted to make *Crikey!* as accessible as we could for fans and the casual reader alike. We'd love to think that casual readers began haunting book and comic fairs and went on-line looking for old comics and artwork. But to get to that, the magazine has to be a comfortable read for everyone.

Um Crikey!

Just a quick note to say how much I enjoyed your first issue which I was surprised but happy to find on the shelves of my local comic shop.
Lots of interesting articles - particularly enjoyed the 'Toys' article (though strange not to mention Daimon in the text) and the 'Misty' article and I certainly look forward to more *Nutty Nations*.

I hope you'll find some space for the (occasionally maligned) *Harrier* Comics line which I felt were a fine example of British independent comics and from which a number of the best current British artists emerged (Gelsi, Campbell etc.). OK their action comics were a bit rubbish but the 'New Wave' ones were generally excellent.
Best of luck

I eagerly await issue two.
James McRobert - via Internet
Harrier will feature in future *Crikey!* pages, James. Our designer Glenn Flanning worked with *Harrier* all those many years ago. I'm also friends with someone who was a mainstay of *Harrier* in the north and I'll ask/bully/bribe him to share his memories.

One of the changes we're making at *Crikey!* is to open up the areas we cover to now include all aspects and periods of GB comics. It's something we heard from fans at marts, in letters and through comments on our website.

Um Crikey!

Having received your first issue of *Crikey!* I wanted to congratulate you on a great magazine. Can't imagine the work that needed doing to get it published!
The cover was brilliantly executed and summed up some of our nostalgic triumphs. As this is the first issue I expect you are trying to find your path, but I wonder whether the balance is weighted a little too much on the anecdotal autobiographical incidents. The walk to the sweetshop was a sweet (ugh!) story in the nineties but surely fandom has moved on since then?
Anyway allow me to wade in on a topic I know a little bit about - the Bellamy article
- felt the comments on *Dan Dare* didn't quite express

the turmoil, I believe, Bellamy found himself in, but I'll leave better authorities than me to comment on that.

• "...and he also produced work for Look and Learn" again implies chronologically this was next; in fact he started with that comic in 1970.

• A very basic error is the mention of Bellamy's first *WOT* Thunderbirds strip. A quick search on the Net would have shown it was *WOT* April 1966 but in *TV Century 21* number 52 published on the 15th January 2066 (the year being that clever device of a 100 years in the future!). See www.technodelic.pmp.blugvander.co.uk/Home.htm and my own www.frankbellamy.co.uk

• "As the deadlines for the work became ever tighter" refers to the drop from two colour and one B&W to just two colour pages. I have never heard why that happened and I note Shaqui does not appear to refer to it at all. Bellamy believed the drop (later on) from a single two-page centrespread to two separate pages was for the foreign market which could not handle a centrespread as well.

(*Fantasy Advertiser* Vol. 3:50 November 1973 - 18 page interview with Bellamy conducted by Dez Skinn and Dave Gibbons.)

• Some comment with Bellamy's handling of the Captain Scarlet covers, I have never heard why he did just the covers but always thought (my opinion only!) that it was because they wanted his artwork on the cover to sell the comic!

• "Just before then in 1968, Bellamy" ...did the *Avengers* TV artwork.

Unfortunately the date is wrong again: "The Winged Avenger" artwork was done in Nov/Dec 1966 and the programme broadcast in the UK & US on 17/02/1967.

• Bellamy, in fact, started *Garth* on 12/07/1971, not 1969 as Glenn states! But I must thank Glenn for making the connection regarding the *Sun/Mirror* "flash wars" - interesting point!

I hope you (and Glenn) don't mind me pointing these things out, but there is enough erroneous scholarship on the UK artists without more being produced. Finally, just in case you feel I've been too hard on Glenn, I did note that Glenn suggested his article was also not necessarily about Bellamy so much as about himself!

My last comment on *Crikey!* (you'll notice I did subscribe to the full term available!) is that I felt the load was outweighed by the good.

But my main gripe follows that of Steve Flanagan - godsircomics.blogspot.com/2007/06/review-crikey.html that I felt the cropped images with no credits were frustrating. Can we see more complete pages as examples together with credits, please?

All of these comments, of course, open up the charge of 'can you do better?' Brian, start asking those who are still with us whether they can contribute NOW before they leave us (I'm no spring chicken myself at 49!). My suggestions: Dez Skinn, Steve Halland, Law Stringer, Norman Wright, David Roach, John Freeman etc etc etc. Then you have these collectors of art (Terry Doyle, Jeff Haythorne etc), sellers of comics (Norman Wright, Jeff West, etc.) and if you have contacts, the originators themselves (John Burns, Mike Noble etc.)

Very best wishes for the future
Norman - via internet

*This is exactly the kind of nit-picking we need, Norman. The more fans like you who get involved with sending in features, suggesting ideas and pointing out errors, then the better *Crikey!* is going to get.*

Um *Crikey!*

My copy arrived yesterday and I am enjoying revisiting



The great Alf Tupper

old friends. Looks like we read much the same things growing up, as you are a about a couple of years older than me. I was lucky in that we had some good paper shops that sold every comic that was around, and when the US DC and Marvel comics started coming across they stocked those as well!

As far as newspaper strips were concerned, my parents got the *Daily Mail*, so I was glued to Fred Bassett - The Hound That's Almost Human! every week day.

TV was *Space Patrol*, *Four Feather Falls*, and later *Fireball XLS* (I was a member of the Fireball fan club!). When we moved from Stafford to Sheffield my parents made me sell my collection of comics, so a second-hand comic stall in the market got all my *Beano*s, *Lions* and *Tigers* ...and such gems as number one of *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *The Fantastic Four*, etc.

I was allowed to keep my *Ranger* and *Look & Learn*s so still had 'The Trigon Empire', but I still felt like I was losing old friends - and for a half-pence worth!

In Sheffield I did start again with *Power Comics* and the later *Alon* *Class* comics. And then came *2000AD*! This was stuff that was as good (and in some cases better) than the US comics. All hoarded much to my parents' annoyance, need I add. I was in my last year of school by then, and a year later was working, so no longer had to rely on pocket money. And then came my discovery of the Sheffield Space Centre, who sold books, magazines, model kits - and comics!

The Tough of the Track was always a favourite. I remember two stories distinctly - one where he is the

Olympic team for the small island of Tristan de Curo and another one where, to get his running back to normal, he goes to Africa for a cure by a witch doctor. In the meantime he repairs an old railway while fighting floods, army ants, etc.

For someone who was useless at sport, Alf's optimistic "I've got two legs, same as them. I'll run 'em!" was a great morale booster, especially as he was a bit of a loner, too ...

Ummmm ...so much for a quick reply!
Anyway, expect a *Four* issue sub by the end of the month.

Cheers
Brian H
- via *Crikey!* website

Some nice memories there, Brian. I was on the school running team and I loved chips - so Tough of the Track was kind of special for me, too.

Um *Crikey!*

Great mag. Great feel to it. Most of the features work for me - not sure about things like Helen Bennett's Jackie Who? Didn't seem to say anything beyond her liking her mum and being worried as a schoolgirl.

I bet people have told you this already but Buster from *Buster* comic wasn't Andy Capp as a kid - he was meant to be Andy's kid. I think they even called it 'Buster Son of Andy Capp' for a while. There was 'Buster's Dream

World' and 'Buster's Diary'. I love the informal style of the mag but can you add a bit more about the panels and pages you show. Dates and artists names would be great. I still love the mag and as you can see, I have endorsed a subscription, issue two in October seems a long way off. Dave Shaw, Rippon

Thanks for the correction, Dave. You never! I like the first (for last) to point out the *Buster* mistake. And faces all round in the *Crilly*! Good. The more people who get in touch when we make a mistake, the better.

So what did we get wrong with this issue?

On *Crilly*!

Many thanks for the copy of *Crilly* which arrived yesterday - very enjoyable reading. Presumably, as a new publication, you'll appreciate some feedback and knowledge about your readers. If you don't appreciate it, you're getting it anyway :-)

General feedback - good spread of material with excellent design (take a bow, Clare), although some articles were a little superficial (e.g. the Bellamy piece which skirted over possibly his greatest work - *Never the Sparten*), while giving the Anderson period much more attention. Good value, well priced - the main reason that I gave up *Spaceships Away* was the price. It couldn't be cheaper given its production values and potential sales,

but my interest wasn't great enough in that particular genre to make it worthwhile for me. In short - I'll certainly be buying issue 2. Background as you (which releases the above and my preferences for the future): we're more or less contemporaries; I was born in 1953 - the first comics I remember are *Jack & Jill* and *Playmate*, followed by *TF*.

Comic: Later came *Vicky*, then *Pollon*, and at one stage I was buying everything I could get my hands on - stuff like *TV Express*, *TV Fun*, *Netpage*, *Humor*, then *Buster* (more for *Maxwell Hawks* and *Maxwell Fuzz* than *Buster* himself) *Maxxzone*, *Jag*, the inevitable *702*, *Days World* and *Knapper*. I was never a fan of *Bacon*, *Bandy*, *Buster* and *Foggy*, though I had friends who bought these, their sister also introduced me to *Buffy* and *Judy*, while another friend bought *Lisa* every week, following his older brother - and they'd kept the back issues! *Lisa* in that period was probably the best of the lot - *Capt Cooke*, *Rory McCall*, *Peddy Pagan*, *Robert Archie*, *Sandy Brown*'s *Schoolboys* and of course *Karl the Viking*. An older cousin had a stack of old *Exiles*, so I got to read (just about everything) there was. There came the 'shilling comics' as our neavegant referred to the *Digests* - *Thriller Picture Library*'s *John Steel* and *Volant*, *Lisa* and *Love Star* Libraries being particular favorites.

As you see, my favorites are the adventure strips rather than the humor of *Bazzerdale* and *Paul* (so seeing

the *Wile E. Coyote*! and the sewer made me a little nervous) but if you keep a balance, you'll keep me.

It would, I think, be helpful, to supply dates where possible for *Natty Nelson* and elsewhere (the ads for example, which are a nice touch).

By the early 1960s, I'd discovered *American* comics, predominantly DC's *Superman* line - *Superman*, *Superboy*, *Adventure*, *Action*, *Jeany Olsen*, *Lisa* (and even *World's Finest* (missing a lot of superior stuff - *Shaz* rectified - hey, I was 7-8 years old!), and by about '64, the new *Narvel*, which I caught around *Spiderman 2*, *FF 12*, *Avengers 5*, *Sgt Fury 5* - and my world changed forever. Although I still dabbled with British comics (even the *Power* stuff to catch up on the *Narvel* I'd missed), it was save the scene.

Harvey said that - again showing my preferences - the reprints of the *Foggy* *Exile* and the forthcoming 'Karl the Viking' from the Netherlands are extremely welcome. If only someone could get the rights to *Never the Sparten*.

So, that's this reader's bald's worth - good luck with this. I'll order Ma 2 soon.

Gerrard Davies

Svensen ●

See you in 93 days. (Unless you bought this a week before issue three comes out. In that case, we might see you in seven days.)



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